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from
DARTMOOR

BEATRICE CHASE



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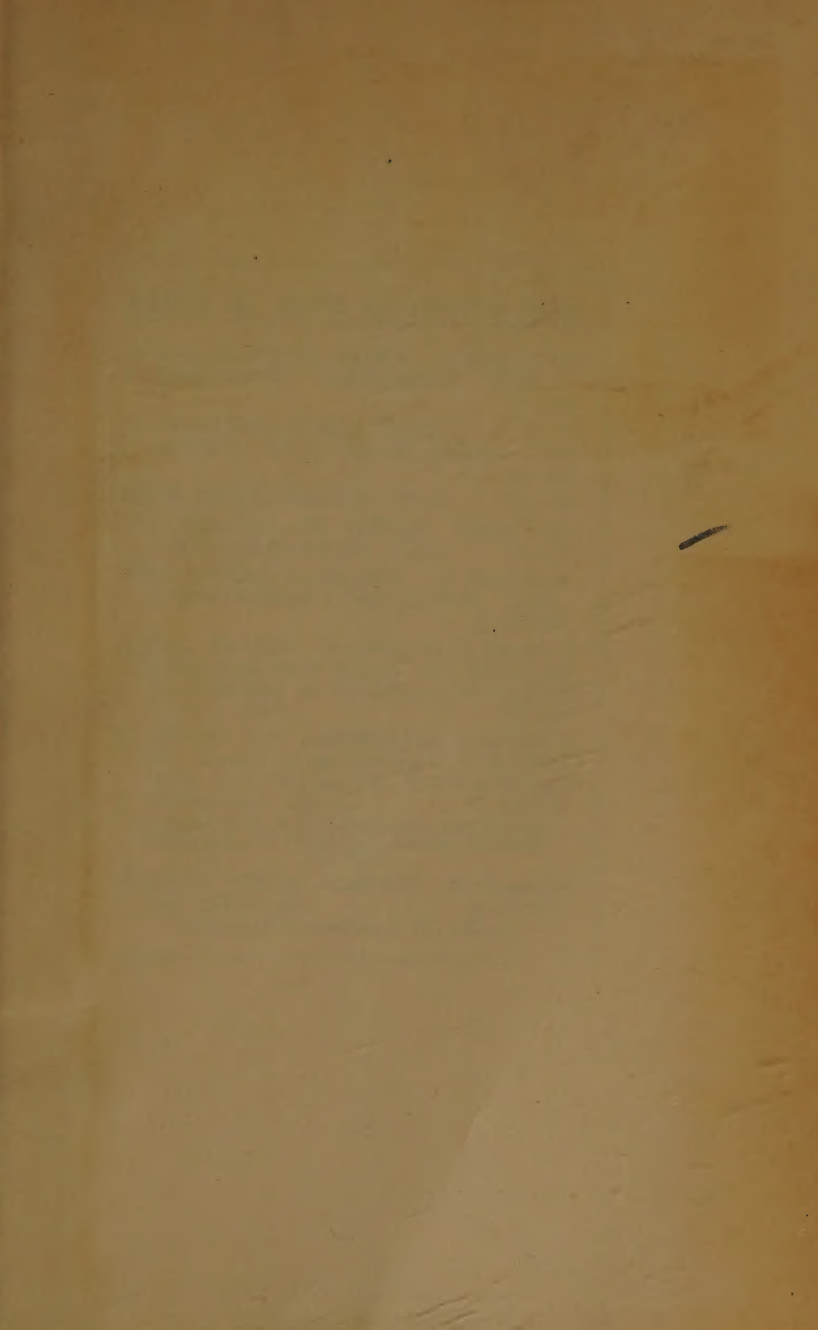
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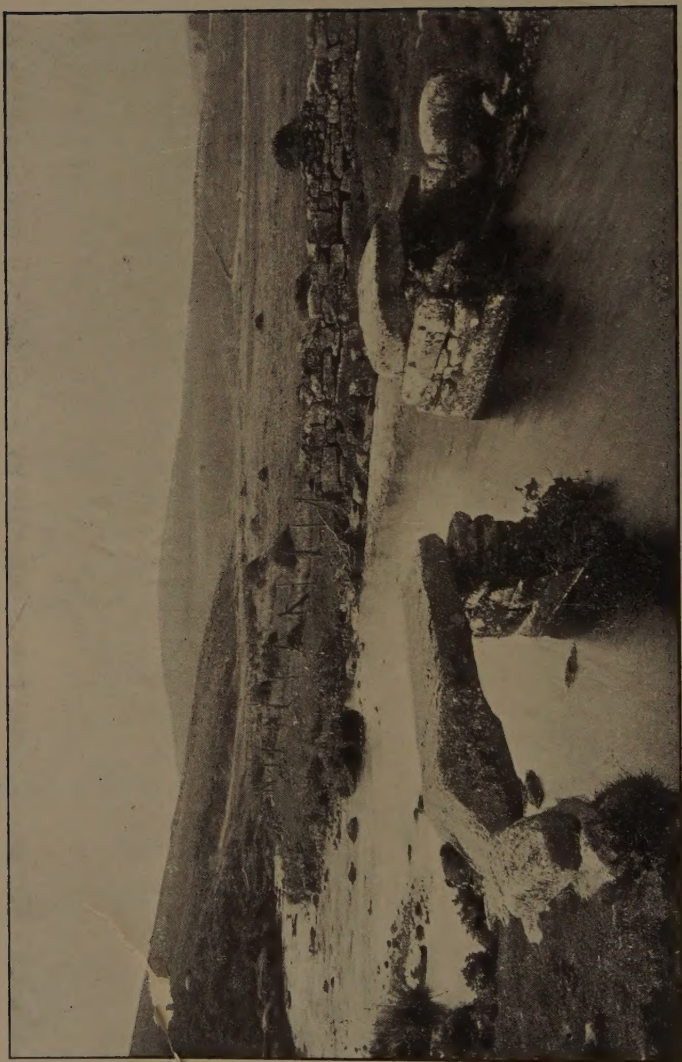
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BELLEVER BRIDGE

PAGES OF PEACE FROM DARTMOOR

BY

BEATRICE CHASE

AUTHOR OF

"THROUGH A DARTMOOR WINDOW," "THE HEART OF THE MOOR," ETC.

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PAGES OF PEACE FROM DARTMOOR

CHAPTER I

COMMON THINGS

ONCE more, oh Beloveds, the time has come when I fling open the magic casement and eagerly greet you. You know that this is the symbol of the flinging wide of the casements of my heart and mind also.

How I have longed for this day! I cannot hope that you long for it as much as I, but still, some few, I know, have counted the days until now.

More than ever you are eager for news of the peerless Moor around whom there has been raging such a storm of battle from hostile forces. It has been a terrible experience for those who like myself dwell, year in and year out, enfolded in her mighty arms. It is over five years since I have slept one night away

from Dartmoor and she has grown not merely into my heart, but into its very core.

The destruction which has threatened her was torture. Everything mighty within one rose up to do battle in her honour. It turned one into a man and a warrior, or if you like, into a mother whose dearest was threatened. The Moor wailed to me in her sobbing winds, pleaded with me in the rain of her tears for succour.

Now, thank God, the danger is past and once more I can send you messages of unalloyed peace from the Dartmoor Window.

This will be a winter book. It is now the heart of the winter, and everyone who visits Dartmoor when she is clothed to her chin in her seal-brown robe of dead heather, loves her more in that guise than in any other. One of the winter joys are the lunches with certain beloved pilgrims at the Old Inn.

On the morning when someone is expected, I rush through my mail to be free at noon when they arrive swathed to their eyes in fur. First, there is a delighted run round Venton, a peep into the rooms of Shadow and of Sunshine, a glimpse through the Dartmoor Win-

dow at the winter glories of the Moor, the visit to the White Chapel with its love-red Rose Lamp and then we dash away to the Old Inn for the cosiest of meals in the dear little familiar room with its huge log fire and its air of utter peace and seclusion.

In winter, the tourists cease from troubling and the trippers are at rest.

Always, I ask for four things for lunch which are known familiarly as the four C's—CURRY, CIDER, COFFEE and CAT. There is an adorable puss puss, a young tom, called Vim, who is a common, very dark English tabby with black pads and amber eyes. He inhabits the Inn and is an essential feature of the lunch especially when we are sitting round the log fire afterwards, drinking our hot, black coffee.

We allow one halcyon hour for the refreshment of body and soul, because at two o'clock in these short, dark days, the pilgrim has to set out again upon the return journey to the town beyond the enchanted land. Yesterday, a dear pair of pilgrims lunched with me and to them, as we sat by the fire, I broke the news that at last the time had come to write my next

Dartmoor book. The rapture with which the announcement was received made me feel misty about the eyes and then one lady spoke up in no uncertain voice.

“I hope,” said she, “that you are not going to have a plot. I hope you are going to tell us all the same things over again. It is old friends, not new ones, that we want. We want the Rainbow Maker and the Window and Mr. Bluejacket and the sunsets and the rains and the breezes and the Moor.”

Mentally I compared this exhortation with one received that morning from a jaded publisher who had remarked that he hoped I should not go too much over the same ground, and I wondered which of these two was the *vox populi*.

All my sympathies are with the lady. Surely, the commonest things of life are the dearest. Common things like sunshine, wind, rain, seed-time and harvest, are things of which one never wearies. At any rate, by those who care not for old friends and common things this book had better be laid down again.

My feeling in the matter has been more

beautifully expressed than I could express it by an old peasant woman of Dorset to whom I am for ever indebted. The story was told me by a friend in whose cottage the old woman lived.

She was seriously ill and needed comforts and careful nursing which were impossible to obtain in her humble little home. My friend's mother, one day, visited her and besought her to be moved to the nearest hospital so that she might have every chance of recovery.

For answer, the old woman raised herself on her elbow and pointed through the window at a tree.

"Madam," she said, "for sixty years I have watched the sun set behind that tree. Do you think I could afford to lose one sunset?"

CHAPTER II

WINTER NIGHTS

OFTEN I ponder on the wisdom of that old peasant woman and often I picture how she must have waited and watched for sunset. Evidently her bedroom faced west, and one can reflect on the long nights and the slow dawns behind her and how she must have longed for the sun to quicken his march across the sky. She would have seen a great deal of the crescent moon and the full moon, the last just before dawn ; but the sunset was her love, speaking to her of going west. She preferred it to comfort, plenty and attendance, preferred it even to the practical certainty of safety. Who shall say that she was unwise ? Or who shall say how much healing there was in this love of hers ? I wish we could all realise the Divine in material things and in Creation. Natural things are sacramentals and our twin brothers. Happy creatures that we are, we

are neither pure spirit nor pure matter, but a mixture of both. Our feet are planted firmly upon Mother Earth while our heads are beyond the stars. To me, human nature is the most complete in Creation. I would immeasurably rather be a human being than an archangel and I would rather be a woman than all the Hosts of Heaven in one. Often I condole with the angels upon being mere angels. Our perfect combination of matter and spirit is the climax of a Divine mind. Think how the very constituents of our bodies contain the elements in Mother Earth! The chemical analysis of the component parts of the human body contain many of the vegetables and minerals which compose the globe. At one stage of so-called decomposition, a dead body smells like newly-turned earth; and think how our colours are reproduced in the sky, the sunset, the flower and the field. Think how our golds, our reds and blues, and browns and grays and blacks and creams are wrought in endless variety by the Master Weaver into the fabric of Creation.

Everyone who has ever been here, acknowledges the spirit of peace which reigns on

Dartmoor, and I often try to analyse the reasons why this peace should be so much more apparent in winter than in summer. There are several, but I think the chief is that in winter we are dominated by night rather than by day. Inevitably day is action and night is rest, especially in a place where conditions are natural, and not artificial. Night begins her reign in midwinter soon after four o'clock and continues it until eight o'clock the next morning. In summer, it is not easy to spend many hours in the company of Queen Night. In winter, one may be heart to heart with her by five o'clock and may study her in all her beauty, clothed in her sable robe, ice gemmed and crescent crowned.

A whole book could be written upon our nights. I have known one—it was a Christmas Eve—which had escaped from the far-off palace of midsummer. It was so still, so balmy that I sat out in a deck-chair until nearly midnight without a coat. It was probably a unique experience and all the more memorable for its rarity. Beside the tinkling stream, under the shade of the leafless sycamore whose bare branches made a black lace-

work against the silver sky, one *felt* immortal. The sense of time was lost, and there was no creature of any kind to interrupt the spell. Summer nights are exquisite, but they are too much haunted by insects to be really happy. Never shall I forget the ebony and silver of that balmy Christmas Eve.

Then there are our other nights, the warm, wild, wet nights when the darkness is palpable and the south-west wind roars in the bare branches like the mellowest of 'cellos. On such nights, there is no ray from moon or star. Their lights are the lights of home and the wind brings fitful whiffs from hidden peat fires. Before bedtime I wrap myself from head to foot and wander out into the storm for the sheer joy of looking in at the various havens. Through the long mullioned windows of the Room of Shadow, one sees the daffodil lamp striking flashes from the ruddy coppers on the mantelpiece and the white silver on the black oak dresser. Through the Dartmoor Window glows the scarlet fire beyond the hyacinth blossoms. Round the west side of the Chapel, the Good Shepherd window gleams like a collection of precious stones with the deep

blue of its still river, the many greens of the garden enclosed, the purple of its distant hills and the glowing, living ruby of the cloak of the Central Figure. The effect of that scene of peace as one stands outside in the blackness, buffeted by the storm, must be seen and felt to be realised.

Last night, Queen Night had on her richest robe of ice. It is full moon and Her Majesty, I notice, often adorns herself in her most glittering array at full moon time. Long icicles hung like crystal fringes round the thatched roofs, embroideries of ice glistened back from the roads and here and there from the sable hillsides. Up the valley stood the great gray church with a pane of glass in her belfry window touched by the moonlight which turned her into a beneficent angel watching over the sleeping village with a brilliant star upon her brow.



THE CATHEDRAL OF THE MOOR

CHAPTER III

HONEY—AND BEES

THE most delicious of all winter foods is honey. Think of a Mind which could, first, conceive honey and then create the wonderful little creatures who make it! Our preserves are pleasant enough, with their imprisoned fruits, varying colours and glittering white squares of preserving sugar, but compared with honey and its mode of manufacture, they are clumsy and the work of the amateur.

The cutting of a new honeycomb is an event. How I love releasing it from its wooden frame into a cut-glass dish and then plunging a spoon deep into it. Every sense is appealed to. The sound of the crushed wax, the sight of the semi-transparent little cells, the flow of amber juice, and the aroma! The scent of countless imprisoned flowers floats out to one in midwinter. Honey is the essence of sunshine, the syrup of blossoms.

The heather honey is rich brown amber and we have it here in perfection. The wonderful little bees distil and preserve for winter the very spirit of the amethyst heather.

There are several men around who keep bees. One knows a great deal about their characteristics. He informs me that the brown Italian bee is better tempered and more industrious than the black English bee. It is also, he adds, an earlier riser.

From the other bee-keeper in these parts, I learnt something of their disposition.

One evening in the early autumn, while on a walk, I saw George looking over his garden wall and stopped for a tell. After a time, he invited me in to see his bees. Unsuspectingly, I accepted. George said he had had them two years and knew and loved them like children, so, of course, no thought of danger crossed my mind. Obediently I approached the hive. He lifted it, which seemed to me a rash thing to do, but then, he knew everything and I nothing. Before I had time even to yell, a bee flew out and stung me in the face. It was the promptest action I have ever seen. I withdrew hurriedly, remarking

that I had been stung, and he put down the hive and followed me, almost too astonished to articulate. He made me stop and extracted the sting and then we found the deed had been perpetrated exactly at the lower end of my nose.

“Now, what is to be done?” I inquired, coldly. “I know a lady who was stung by a bee on her nose and, next day, her face was so swelled, her eyes wouldn’t open. You know, my mother will really be fearfully annoyed if I get taken like that. Do tell me, quickly, what is the best thing to do?”

He was miserable enough before but that finished him.

“Oh, my dear life. Run to my wife, Miss Beatrice, and ask her for a wet blue-bag. There’s nothing like it. I am sorry, sure enough, plaguey old thing——”

Before he had finished I was fleeing in the direction of his house, which I entered without knocking, and wailing for a wet blue-bag. In ten seconds the article was forthcoming, and I was holding it to my afflicted nose. George’s wife was most sympathetic but appeared, in

some unaccountable way, to consider the fault entirely her husband's.

After a bit I put down the blue-bag and found my fingers were stained deep ultramarine.

"Why, it comes off!" I cried in horror. "Is my nose blue too?"

"Oh, yes, Miss," she answered, composedly. "I will fetch a looking-glass."

And she did. And if ever you are tempted to wonder whether you are beautiful, blue your nose only—no other feature—and then contemplate yourself in a small, cheap looking-glass with a crack across the middle. It will take all doubt from your mind.

"Goodness gracious!" I shrieked, appalled. "How ever am I to get home? Won't the beastly stuff come off?"

"I shouldn't advise you to wash it off, Miss. Your nose may swell if you do."

I cast down the mirror in despair, and, at this moment, George appeared with two cauliflowers as a peace-offering. He did not even smile at my appearance, which fact appeased me much more than the cauliflowers, and just as I was about to consult him as to the pos-

sibility of washing my face, I felt another sting, this time on my right wrist.

There was another bee, crawling up inside my coat-sleeve. Then they decided that the only safe thing was to undress me, and as it was by then dark in the house, they took me out of doors to do it. My hat and coat were removed, turned inside out and shaken; and they both searched industriously through my hair. What the tableau must have been I luckily didn't think of at the time. No more bees were found, so I was dressed again and sent home with soothing words and much regret. I slunk through the village without meeting a soul, and arrived in sight of the house, only to see two girls approaching. In despair I got out my "hankey" and pretended to blow my nose as I said "Good-evening."

No further encounters occurred and at last I reached the haven of home.

"How late you are!" began the Rainbow Maker, as I entered.

She broke off, struck absolutely speechless by the ghastliness of my appearance. The walk and agitation had made me more crimson

than I am by nature and my nose was still, of course, a rich ultramarine.

“I haven’t been taking a berth as a walking advertisement of Reckitt’s blue,” I explained hurriedly. “One of George’s bees stung me, and they said it was the only thing to prevent it swelling. Is it swelling, do you think?”

The Rainbow Maker mustered nerve enough to examine me more closely. “Yes, I am afraid it is beginning to.”

I fled upstairs to the looking-glass and passed most of the evening before it. By bedtime my fears were calmed. There were no developments. But, all the same I have learnt all I ever personally wish to know about bees.

CHAPTER IV

THE LAST OF THE TWEED DOG

THE Tweed Dog is dead.

Let no one repine.

Every dog has his day and if ever a dog had a day, she had. She was getting old and very deaf and had several fits, so it was time for her to lay down the burden of life.

Some time, we shall meet again. Of course I believe in a future existence for animals but I qualify my belief. First of all, I believe in the indestructibility of matter. This is not a question requiring faith at all. It is a scientific fact. Nothing that exists can cease to exist. Matter can be changed endlessly from one form to another but it cannot drop back into non-existence. Animal bodies after death pass through endless changes and branch out into new forms of vegetable life. In addition to this indestructibility of their bodies, I believe

that any animal who loves has also a form of soul. Love is not merely indestructible, it is immortal. It lifts its possessor not merely to the heights of the human but to the Divine. All love is an emanation of God and once that spark has been lighted, it cannot be extinguished. We all know, especially in the case of dogs, how an animal can even rise to the heights of giving its life to save its master, and with all reverence we may say of this four-footed friend, "Greater love than this no man hath." No one but the Divine could have evolved and created anything so wonderful.

We know of the mother instinct in animals. We know the naturalist's pathetic story of the mother spider who, when surprised by fire, lay down on her back, took the baby spider into her arms and so securely covered it with arms and legs that though she was burned to death, the baby survived.

Anyone who denies a future life to these loving brutes must be lower than the brutes themselves.

Further, there is the significant fact that God has *chosen* to create animals. Perhaps

we do not always sufficiently realise their Divine origin. He need not have made them but He did and more; He made us so dependent on them that if the whole animal creation suddenly ceased to exist it is scarcely an exaggeration to say that in a month the human race would be half blotted out and this earth uninhabitable.

Again, God considered animals necessary to the happiness of the first Paradise and He is not a Being who changes His mind. If they formed a large part of the joys of man in Paradise, is it imaginable that the Eternal Paradise would be complete without them?

But the chief reason of all for their preservation is the fact that God-made-Man chose to associate Himself personally so closely with the animals. He was born in the company of oxen. His first worshippers were the simple shepherds with their innocent charges. He rode upon an ass. The most tender words of all His preaching are those in which He tells of the Divine Father's solicitude even for the common, cheap little sparrows, and God Himself uses the Lamb and the Dove as

symbols or even as forms in which to conceal His Godhead.

We should love animals if possible at least as much as God loves them, and I am content in my faith that the Tweed Dog and I shall meet again.

CHAPTER V

THE STRANGER CHILD ON DARTMOOR

OF the native child I have written more than once. Lately it has been my privilege to watch the effect of the Moor upon a stranger child, a little girl from the East End of London. She is a highly nervous subject and had been frightened almost out of her senses by the air-raids.

She and her mother, a widow, came to reside in a tiny, old, sunny, thatched cottage all to themselves, instead of living in rooms in the same house with other people. This in itself was delightful, and besides this, the child found Paradise. She is eight years old, and knew nothing of the country. One mild winter afternoon, when not a flower was yet open, she joined me on the bridge above the clear, brown stream and began to talk. Did I know what daisy-chains were like? Were they long chains, long enough to go round

her neck? Did I think there would ever be enough daisies out to make a whole chain with? She had heard, too, of buttercups, and she longed to see them, because "they said" they were bright yellow. Could you make buttercup-chains as well as daisy-chains, because, if so, they would be gold chains, wouldn't they? And did buttercups grow in the fields? and, if so, would she be allowed to go in and pick them if she promised to be very careful about not treading on the grass? When I had successfully conquered a sudden desire to weep, I explained what she would see and feel like in hay-time. I told her of the sheets of white and gold all up and down the land. I told her of the walls on the way to school—walls mauve with wild violets, draped with pink roses, guarded by regiments of royal red-purple foxgloves. She listened spellbound, but obviously could not even imagine a place where you could roll on grass and pick more flowers than you could ever carry home. We sat on for a time in silence. Then, sidling nearer to me, she waved her hand to the lines of tors above us, and said, "Isn't it like living in a great fairy-ring to

live on Dartmoor? Look at the ring of the hills right round us!"

Wise, wise child! It is indeed like living in a great fairy-ring to live on Dartmoor, and you, from the East End of London, perhaps know the enchantment of this magic circle better even than we who have never lived in a city slum.

On one occasion, I gave her mother a big bundle of newspapers for firing. Among them, happened to be a set of proofs of *Gorseblossoms*.

Next day, her mother discovered that the child had picked out and smoothed every crumpled page, after which she sorted them into order and then began to learn the poems by heart.

In due time, the school-children were commanded to recite a "piece" which they themselves were each to choose. This child recited *The Open Door*, and returned home in a vastly superior frame of mind, remarking to her mother, "You can't think what a bit of *good* poetry sounded like, among the rubbish the others recited."

Once, upon a bitter golden afternoon, I

took this little alien for a drive to Bellever bridge. She was lifted out of herself all the way. Coming home, she said after a long silence, "Well, I have seen the river Dart at last." I agreed, delighted she had grasped the truth. "And that is the river," she went on thoughtfully, "which asks every year for a heart."

"What do you know about that?" I asked.

"I read it in one of your books," she answered, a trifle patronisingly. "Don't you remember it? It is poetry:

'River of Dart, River of Dart,
Every year thou demandest a heart.'

I maintained a reverent silence for the rest of the drive, feeling, as I often do feel in the presence of children, that they are beyond me.

That evening, after her tea, she sat beside the fire, very thoughtful.

"Mother, who made the Dart?" she asked at last.

"God," replied her mother.

"And why did God make the Dart want a heart?"

"Perhaps some day you will know. I don't."

I wonder, child, if you will ever know that universal craving for love which flows from every heart, beginning with the Heart of God, echoing through the hearts of mankind and re-echoing even in that mysterious river from which our enchanted moorland takes her very name ?

It was some poor exile who wrote the following lines which, to me, are endlessly touching.

“ One thing I ask of Heaven :

 A very little gold

That I may go to Devon

 And live there when I'm old.

And when my day is over,

 I pray that I may lie

Under the western clover,

 Beneath the western sky,

By the sound of the waves that sunder,

 And the winds that triumph free,

And all the holy wonder

 Of the Blessed West Countree.”

CHAPTER VI

THE EDUCATIONAL VALUE OF UGLINESS

THERE is one thing in this village which strikes one as sad and mysterious.

I have been pondering it, especially since the advent of the Stranger Child. It is the apparent inability of the natives to see any beauty in the place. You may meet a gray-haired man who has never slept away for one night in his life and you say to him, enthusiastically: "What a lovely place this is!"

Thereat he will turn, cast an unappreciative glance upon the gorse-gilded hills, the castellated tors, the pellucid sky, the unpaintable gray-mauve-blue of distant peaks and chains, and answer, astonished, "Do you think so? I see no beauty in it."

At first you are so staggered you think he is joking. But, after a time, you find they mean it. They live among beauties which

make artists and poets almost crazy with delight and yet see no beauty anywhere.

Why is it, one wonders? Not one of the native children of any age is capable of thinking and feeling as the Stranger Child feels. I long to transport the population to Whitechapel Road or Somers Town, keep them there in the drab houses, under the drab sky, looking on the drab streets for six months, then bring them back and say triumphantly, "*Now* do you know beauty when you see it?"

It would seem that in order to appreciate beauty, we must, first, thoroughly learn ugliness. This appears intensely sad, but one can only hope that it cuts both ways: that dwellers in ugliness see no ugliness because they have never known beauty. It explains what has hitherto been inexplicable, namely, why our poor don't die of the sheer hideousness of their lifelong surroundings.

I suppose the same principle applies to other things.

One cannot understand companionship till one has learnt loneliness. We do not value love till it has gone.

Most, perhaps, this applies to sin: it is the

very whitest who are the most acutely sensitive to stain.

If we could see clear-sightedly through this law of the inverse ratio, it would explain many perplexities and would show how evenly the seemingly unequal balance is kept adjusted.

CHAPTER VII

BLUEJACKETS AS DOMESTIC SERVANTS

THERE is more talk than ever, these days, of the domestic servant problem. The Home was seriously menaced, even before the war, and now, especially in a certain class, the happy homes of England have almost ceased to exist. Child-rearing, except here and there, is practically an impossibility. Yet the nation is built upon the homes and the children, and this is by far the most serious question in the reconstruction of the Empire.

I confess it often puzzles me why, especially in the country where circumstances are more suitable, people do not utilise pensioned Service men as domestic servants. Of the Junior Service I know nothing so I will say nothing, but we have proved, by long experience, that there are no house-servants in the world to equal Bluejackets. "Taffrail" and "Bartimeus" describe them to us under all conditions

on active service, but does anyone except Beatrice Chase discourse about them in the home? I think not.

When the Junior Bluejacket had to leave, we advertised in the *Western Morning News* for a Coastguardsman. We prefer them because they are so specially domesticated, so fatherly. However, we were snapped up by a charming Chief Yeoman of Signals who described himself as "very domesticated."

I yelled with delight at such an expression from such a man, but I yelled even more at the long-deferred fulfilment of my craving described in the chapter "Lapses of Memory" in the first *Dartmoor Window* book. Anyone who is kind enough to remember my feeble efforts will recollect that at the end of that chapter, my weakened mind craves a Reservist Signaller to do nothing but remedy other peoples' memories in fire-red letters a foot long on the sky.

In our first reply to the Chief Yeoman's application, we sent him the book and asked if he didn't think that passage had been prophetically written for him. He was, of course, amused beyond words and, in due time, came

out to interview us. By then, a First Class P.O. Coastguardsman was also after us. This man had been Captain's Coxswain, and a Captain's Coxswain has always been the ambition of my life. Our last Bluejacket had been Admiral's Bowman, which is very near it. But we naturally closed with the Chief Yeoman. We feel he is Fate in view of that chapter.

I know that many people use retired Bluejackets as gardeners and outdoor handy-men. That is not my point. Why waste such treasures out of doors when we want homes and children? Think of what the naval training is in all branches of house-craft. Think of the men who train them. Think of the Being who, every Sunday, dons white gloves in order to search every nook of the ship for dirt. Then remember that the pensioners are the best men. They have been proved and have stood the test of years. Further, they are absolutely healthy in mind and body. They have no nerves, no cranks, no peeves, no tantrums. Especially since the war, there are numbers of them who are longing for a quiet, sheltered, homely life after

their exposure to weather and the nervous tension they have suffered.

The Chief Yeoman of Signals plunged me into an abyss of despair when I first saw his papers. I told him bitterly I should have felt much more settled if the top left-hand corner had been torn off. Instead of this he has twenty-six V.G.'s representing character. These are in a long column right down the length of one parchment. In the next column, "mental ability," there is a string of V.G.'s embellished with many "Superiors" and "Exceptionals." He has never once been deprived of a Good-conduct badge or had a scratch against him in all these years of service.

Perhaps you can understand my despair at the thought of why such a man should come out to Dartmoor to do common house-work. I confided my woes to the "Devon Sailor Man," who, from his ship, promptly sent me the following chastening. "My dear Ladye, You never can or *will* realise the relief at putting behind one the twenty-two or more years of horror of lower-deck life—and entering in some however small measure to the

Sanctities of Home Life. Clean grates, carry coal, wash up and sift cinders? I'd willingly—nay gladly and riotously—do them all this very day!"

By the way, the Devon Sailor Man has set up a book-selling business. He says he will never, never tell customers that books are out of print, and he is game to send books all over the country if people wish. Anyone who likes may send me a postcard for his address and I hope many will make his personal acquaintance. He is worth it.

He has put the domestic position into a few sentences, but I may possibly be allowed to enlarge on them by practical examples from our own experience.

The Bluejacket is the antipodes of the female domestic horror. First, he is noiseless and silent. The Silent Navy has not its name for nothing. They go about the house like panthers. Next, they are observant. Nothing escapes them. A day or two after a new Bluejacket arrives, one finds his handiwork shining silently in all sorts of unexpected places. The second night after the C. Y. S.'s arrival, the silver on the dinner-

table shone like stars. For one thing he washes up in clean hot water instead of in a tepid, greasy stew. Next Noon, I was the proud possessor of clean snow-boots and goloshes. At lunch I went into the scullery to wash my hands to find that my own particular, private, pet soap-dish had been washed, dried and polished. These manifestations haunt one throughout the house all day long. They are done in silence, unseen and without orders. The Bluejacket's eye is never off one and nothing is too much trouble. They have one most alluring trick of echoing every order. For instance, I say "I want a small fork." "Small fork, Miss," says the Echo. "We shall want a pint of milk to-night." "Pint of milk, Miss," and so on.

Usually, they are intensely kind. This is partly the outcome of their entire unselfishness. Naval training leaves no room for self which is sunk in the common good. Yet though each Bluejacket has precisely the same fundamental characteristics, he never loses an atom of his own individuality. This extraordinary attribute of the training cannot be fully realised in the Service. It is not

until they are living isolated lives as separate individuals that one sees how the Navy makes the highest type of man without in any way destroying initiative or turning him into a machine.

The even temper and kindness is a thing above price. Instinctively I always run to Mr. Bluejacket for sympathy in all my joys and sorrows. His remark when anything nice is shown him is, "That's all right, Miss," with an emphasis on "right." His panacea for trouble is "Oh, dearr," with an emphasis on the "Oh." In trouble, however, one doesn't have to run to him. He is there, silent, at one's elbow. I remember, one day, I was standing in the scullery gazing in speechless despair at the lighting lamp which was slowly dripping oil on to the shelf below it. Out of the gloom behind me emerged a gentle murmur, "Perhaps it isn't really leaking, Miss. I daresay you only overfilled it." On another occasion the fire had got low and I was obliged to rekindle it. I arranged the paper and wood to my satisfaction and was just about to get off my knees for a match when a lighted spill appeared from behind my

left shoulder with Mr. Bluejacket, whom I didn't even know was in the room, behind the spill.

Another time, the Junior Bluejacket returned from dinner to find me in the scullery mournfully sniffing a row of enamel saucepans. He had been absent an hour, he had entirely lost the thread of my occupation, but he didn't waste time asking what was the matter. In a flash he leapt into the breach, remarking, "You had much better take the light blue one, Miss. That hasn't had onions cooked in it."

We hear a great deal now about "atmosphere." I confess that at times the word seems to me to be overdone, and it aggravates me, but even I am bound to admit that there is a unique atmosphere about a house which is run by Bluejackets. When one or other of these men come into the house, I feel all my fur go down. I am stroked the right way at once, whereas with the female domestic horror, I spend my life with all my fur on end. In fact, at a mere touch it even emits sparks. To me, apart from their work, the Bluejacket Atmosphere

alone is worth its money and so it would be to any refined and highly sensitive woman.

The Bluejacket in the house assumes many unconscious rôles. In the sick-room, he is perfect. He is never the least flurried at finding himself there. He never unnerves the invalid by pity. On the contrary, he cheerily braces one up. These men have lived, all their lives, shoulder to shoulder with death and it is obvious, except to themselves, how they treat him as a familiar friend. Never have I known any other class who looks at Death as they do. For them, he has no terrors, in fact he seems to be as dear and familiar as Sleep and Sunrise. One of our Bluejackets once told me that he prayed daily to remain at Venton "till the Great Day," meaning the day of his death. This atmosphere in a sick-room is indescribable—and priceless.

The other day, when the Rainbow Maker was very ill with heart trouble, Mr. Bluejacket floated into her room and made delectable little jokes to her. Two years ago, when it was my turn to be ill with heart, I was ordered to breakfast upstairs in the bitter

weather. Mr. Bluejacket used to cook and bring up my breakfast, to which time I counted the hours, not so much for breakfast as for him. He floated in with the tray, remarking, "*Good-morning, Miss.*" He always puts the emphasis on "Good," and that added to his divine Demshur accent which makes it "gude" bucks one up at once and one feels it is a jolly good morning.

The next remark was how many ponies he met on the roads coming over and what colours they were. The third, how many mice were trapped during the night. Of course his serene manner is one of the most perfect things about him. All Bluejackets appear to be born sick nurses. They are more than motherly.

Between ourselves, I suspect that the Bluejacket's pet rôle is that of House Jester. He is a born clown and he can clown without ever being forward or familiar. One gets it in sudden sparks and flashes all day long.

On one occasion, the Chief Yeoman informed the Rainbow Maker that he was going over to a farm to get his hair cut. Male hair here is cut by sheep-shearers. The Rainbow

Maker asked sympathetically if his wife was going with him.

“Oh no, Ma'am,” replied the Chief. “It’s not quite so serious as all that.”

The Chief Yeoman rolls. He can’t walk and hates it. His mode of progression is a roll, but what is more enthralling, he rolls indoors when standing still. Be it remembered, he demobilised to come here and the swing of the bridge still had him tight. He plants his feet firmly on the floor and then sways from the hips. As he talks to you or while he is laying a cloth, he contends the whole time with huge waves. One day, as he leant over to place my knife, I thought the wave had won, but he gave a lurch and steadied himself. He is entirely unconscious of it and it only shows how they are perpetually balancing. I never mentioned it lest he should remember and correct it. It was the most fascinating thing I ever saw.

After he had been here only a few nights and when I was still very much afraid of him, he was transferring eggs from one basket to another on the kitchen table. I stood across the room idly watching when suddenly he

dropped an egg. Never shall I forget the series of lightning convolutions he went through in his endeavour to catch it. A professional conjuror wasn't in it, nor shall I ever forget the expression of pure despair on his face. Of course he did not catch it and it landed with a spat on the matting. The profane silence which followed finished me and I fled shrieking to the Rainbow Maker and sat beside her bed, inarticulate. She asked severely: "What misfortune has happened to that poor man *now?*" another lurid character sketch of me. She declares that when unseemly yells of mirth arise from me, she always knows that some hideous misfortune had befallen the Chief Yeoman. I quickly returned to comfort him and said if he would spoon up the remains into a cup I would eat them fried with bacon for breakfast. I am always ready to help a shipmate in trouble.

On another occasion, when I really did think I should have died, he went ahead of me into the larder with a milk bowl in the dark. The larder is very tiny, but I was in a hurry and crowded in after him for a cup.

Just as I got alongside, out of the darkness came a report like a revolver shot, a smothered remark from the Chief which was unintelligible and a sound of rapid pouring.

“What have you done?” I inquired nervously, to which came the query in freezingly polite tones: “Did you till that mouse-trap there for me, Miss?”

Then I knew and left the larder fighting for air and breath. I had blown up a Chief Yeoman of Signals and a milk bowl in the mouse-trap. I rolled round and round in agony holding my sides. He emerged for a candle and floor-cloth remarking sadly: “It’s a very lucky thing for you, Miss, that I didn’t go astern with the shock.”

It was one of those explosive mouse-traps that go off like a bomb at a touch and he had, in the dark, put the milk bowl on it.

It has fallen to him to define or sum up my carving. Many have tried to and failed. My notion of carving a fowl is to plant the knife and fork firmly in its centre and then pull hard in opposite directions. The first time he witnessed this orgy, he stood, alert, at my elbow and, after a few seconds, murmured

dulcetly: "Hadn't I better move the lamp, Miss, before there is an accident? And besides, Miss, I chased that fowl all round the farmyard, the day you ordered it. I don't want to chase it again all round this room."

The Rainbow Maker says, when asked what she did during the great war, will always reply, "I fed a Cormorant."

Mrs. C. Y. S. says: "Where you keep a Pig, nothing is wasted."

The Chief and I held an indignation meeting of two and said if we could not be treated with more respect by our owners, we should both give notice.

The superior digestive powers possessed by the Cormorant over the Pig rankles with the Chief. I can eat anything but strawberries and potatoes. There are quite a lot of things he can't eat. One is mushrooms. In the mushroom season, if the Rainbow Maker is at home, out of respect for her feelings, I only eat mushrooms three times a day. If she is absent, I have them five times. One evening, when the Chief came in for dinner, on finding me cheerfully cooking mushrooms for the third time that day, his self-control

forsook him and he remarked bitterly: "Mushrooms *again!* Really, Miss, you have the digestion of a goat."

I burrowed into the digestive powers of a goat, and with increasing bitterness the Chief informed me that a goat can eat and digest tin cans. I pressed for the cause of his disapproval and extracted the fact that he was doubled up with indigestion due to mushrooms at his dinner which had made him so ill that he had burnt the remainder and had then, to cure himself, eaten a raw onion which completed his destruction. I administered a dose of digestive medicine and sympathy and ate my mushrooms under his disgusted nose.

Mr. Bluejacket by now is the most spoilt thing in the Kingdom. Owing to the chapters about him in two of my other books, he has become notorious. Lovely ladies lurk in the village announcing they will not leave Widecombe without shaking hands with Mr. Bluejacket, and others run after him to identify him. Some buy his photograph and make him sign it. He has become so hardened, so brazen, that now on summer

afternoons, he usually meets the brakes, knowing he is sure to be welcome and wanted.

After writing the chapter about him in my last book, I told him he had better read it before it went to press. When he had finished his work, I sent him to wash his paws, and then sat down in the Dartmoor Window pretending to type but in reality watching him as he sat opposite reading.

Never have I spent such a chastening half-hour.

He did not once smile. He read it slowly with a slightly puzzled air as though thinking "what awful piffle these popular authors do write!"

When finished, he folded the sheets together, got up and floated out of the room, merely remarking as he went, "Passed censor, Miss," leaving me gasping.

After the book appeared, he melted into the Room of Shadow one day where I was dictating letters to Lily and interrupted ruthlessly with the remark: "No wonder your new book is selling, Miss."

I said "Why?" and he responded: "My

sister to Torquay saw a crowd round Iredale's window there and when she went to see what was up, there was the whole window full of your book *standing open to show my photograph.*"

CHAPTER VIII

HOW THE CHIEF YEOMAN REACHED DARTMOOR

IT is worthy of record, the style in which Mr. C. Y. S. reached the Moor. On a certain Saturday morning we received his first reply to the advertisement. The Rainbow Maker answered his letter that day, sending the book, and she had another letter from him on the Monday saying he was trying to get leave to come out for the day on Tuesday. Meantime, another case of serious illness had occurred in Mr. Bluejacket's family, so on Monday we wired to Mr. C. Y. S. to get eight days' leave instead of one and stay over the pinch. We explained in the wire that his wife could return the same night in the car, leaving him behind, and we prepaid the reply which is the most certain method I know of not receiving one.

While awaiting developments, we ordered the car to meet the 11.15 a.m. on Tuesday.

The C. Y. S.'s reply did not come till just as the office was closing on Monday evening. It was a dirge to say that he could not get the eight days' leave.

He did not say whether he was coming next day or not. There was nothing to be done so we went to bed not having done it. Overnight, however, I prepared a provisional 'phone message to stop the car and proposed to detain the postman unlawfully while I read the C. Y. S.'s letter which was to arrive in the morning. When you are reduced to the state we were then in, you become impervious to regulations. Next morning, therefore, I detained the postman and read the letter. It stated that the one day's leave had been granted, so I tore up the 'phone message and let the postman depart in peace.

Then I scuffled through my mail, got everything preternaturally ready ahead of time and we waited. We also continued to wait. They should have been here at noon. 12.30 came and went without a sign. We knew not whether or not to lunch. However, we did at 1. By 1.30 there was still no sign so I went to the village to 'phone for news of the

car. The reply came through that it had broken down a mile out and they were walking. There was of course snow on the roads, likewise ice. This was a mere incident. I asked how they proposed to get them back and they said they could only manage it by the 3.15, as the 6 p.m. would be after dark, and with the roads as they were, travelling after dark would be impossible. Then did I lose my temper and I urged in suitable terms that it was the car's fault they had missed the 3.15, and I could not allow a delicate woman to walk the six miles back as well as out. This so unnerved them that they promised to send.

With a sigh of relief, I returned to Venton to find Mr. and Mrs. C. Y. S. arrived and the Rainbow Maker, not knowing what I had done, skirmishing for a horse and farm cart. The reply to her inquiry disclosed the fact that the horse was lame and the boy was away at a funeral. I soothed her with the promise of the car which, however, she looked on as a snare, so when an angel appeared at 2.30 in the form of my Lily secretary to post letters and to cope with all the fresh uproars which would certainly have occurred since her departure at

11, she was hurtled back to the village to order her daddy's pony cart for the 6 p.m. train, and to stop the delusive car by 'phone.

We then settled down once more to discuss with the C. Y. S. the extreme unlikelihood of his either wishing to come or to remain if he did come, and while still in the thick of this enthralling wrangle, we saw a car sail past the Dartmoor Window, and anchor, it being then 3.20.

I went out to inquire. Yes, it was my car. Yes, it was to meet the 6 p.m. Yes, they would have two hours to wait but that could not be helped. I decided that a car in the hand was better than two pony carts in the bush so I sent the car to the village to stop the pony cart.

They left here at 3.40 and we then staggered to bed to recover. Before leaving, the C. Y. S. had assured us that he could get demobilised in three days and would be with us the following Monday at latest. I retorted that if I had had a prayer left in me, I would pray for an increase of faith, but I hadn't, and was a howling sceptic on the subject of demobilisation. However, he was instructed to write

and wire at intervals as the cause proceeded or didn't proceed.

On Thursday morning, we received a letter to say that the first stage was completed and on the Friday, one week after our advertisement had appeared, came a wire to say he was demobilised and discharged. The original plan had been for him to come here at once to a lodging till the House of Bluejacket was once more in fair repair, when we could release the C. Y. S. to return after his furniture. The Rainbow Maker and I decided, however, that we had not the nerve to get him here and then release him again, so we wrote instructing him to carry on about his furniture and not to come till he had started it off. He was also told to wire which day he would arrive and by which train and station.

Then there was a lull while they made more Schemes for Killing Time. On the Monday, hostilities recommenced with a letter from the C. Y. S. saying he did not think it was necessary for him to see the furniture off once he had packed. On Tuesday, another letter stating he was having difficulty in finding anyone to remove. On Wednesday, no news at

all, so we wired at 9 a.m. prepaying the reply, asking him to wire station and train as we had had no news of either and no car was yet ordered.

We waited as usual. This office closed at 1 which is its custom on Wednesdays and still there was no reply. We had given it up and I was getting dinner, when at 7.10 in the snow and moonlight, appeared two strange girls with a wire which they had brought four miles, from the other office, with the charge of 3d. portorage. The wire stated that the C. Y. S. was coming to Newton Abbot station next day but gave no train. There was nothing to be done. Every office was then shut so once more I tottered to bed. Next morning before dawn, I prepared another provisional 'phone, ordering a car from Newton and leaving a space that I might fill in the hour after once more detaining the postman while I read the C. Y. S.'s letter. This all came off and the hour was 2.20. I filled it in, sent it and the postman off to the village with likewise a postcard to my Lily secretary to tell her to call at the P.O. for the reply before coming over here to work. She arrived at

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9.30 stating that the car would meet the 2.20. It did, and the C. Y. S. arrived at 3.30.

He announced that his wife was not coming for a month—at which news we both quietly fainted away—and also that his furniture would probably not arrive that night. We were entirely cold about the furniture, but the thought of a pining wife and a lonely C. Y. S. fending for himself in the cottage for a month was not to be borne, so after a discussion in which Mr. Bluejacket took a fatherly interest, the C. Y. S. was despatched to the village to send his wife a wire telling her to come on Monday.

This was supplemented by letters and the Rainbow Maker also sent a postcard to order a Victoria to meet Mrs. C. Y. S. at 11.36 on Monday. These letters and the postcard were written on the Thursday night, ready for the morning, and we all went to bed worn out but happy.

At 12.15 I was awakened from a sound sleep under the impression that, after all, the Germans had landed in England. Loud, vulgar and excessively cheerful whistles were floating in through my North window and

there was also a steady banging of the gate under me. Bright moonlight was flowing in from the south-west. I pondered till the awful solution occurred to me. *It was the C. Y. S.'s furniture.* I rose, put my head through the casement and remarked "Yes" in an encouraging tone, but there was no reply and the sound of hobnailed boots melted away towards the cottages. I returned to bed thanking my stars that I had left the key in the cottage door during the afternoon.

From then night was turned into day. The next sound was the C. Y. S. himself, escorted by the men, returning to the village in search of the vans. These came in due time and they unloaded till 2.30 a.m. The C. Y. S.'s host arose and went to rout out the neighbouring farmer for a lodging for the horses. The hostess also turned out, lit a fire, cooked them tea, and they sat up by the fire till 6 a.m. The C. Y. S. toiled all day and I never saw such a boiled owl as he was by evening. It seemed that on their triumphal march, the men had also knocked another distant unoffending farmer out of bed because they wanted an extra horse for a bad hill. Their passage

through the village more or less woke everybody up and one woman thought it was an earthquake.

There was another ominous lull on Saturday and Sunday in order that the fun might begin on Monday, which it did. The first was a letter from Mrs. C. Y. S. raising various genuine difficulties about arriving on Monday, but, as we knew this had crossed a full letter of directions, we remained unmoved.

At 10.15 I was in the middle of letters and the Rainbow Maker was appropriately manufacturing a "Winter Sunset" necklace when a boy on a gee galloped past the Window. We recognised him as the son of the owner of the Victoria. With shaking knees, I went to the door to be greeted with the news that his father had only just received the postcard which ought to have been delivered on Saturday, and so he hadn't gone to Newton. It was then 10.30, Mrs. C. Y. S. was arriving in an hour as a defenceless stranger knowing nothing, and Newton is twelve miles from here.

We hurtled the boy on the gee to the village to 'phone to Newton for a car, and to bring back the reply. At 11.20 he returned

saying the car would meet the train. We sighed with joy.

At 11.45 came a wire to the C. Y. S. I received it and handed it to him remarking, "This is to say your wife isn't coming. We haven't any money but we do see life."

With outward composure, he opened it and announced that, on the contrary, it was to say she is coming. A cheer went up at her sportingness and I returned to my letters.

In twenty-five minutes came a dirge from the post-mistress stating that she had just been rung up by the car to say that Mrs. C. Y. S. hadn't arrived by the 11.36 and they were awaiting further instructions.

We sat down and thought deeply. It was the calm of despair. All the ramifications of the situation came before us. Mrs. C. Y. S. had missed her train, or else the car had met the wrong train, or else she had refused the car because she had been told to look out for a Victoria.

We decided that it was now time the station-master took a hand. Nothing less would do. First, we despatched the long-suffering Lily secretary with a 'phone to the car telling them

to look again and, if unsuccessful, to meet the next train from Exeter. Then I paddled out in the gales and floods and despatched the C. Y. S. himself with another 'phone. This was to the station-master, giving a full account of all the episodes, asking him to search the station for Mrs. C. Y. S., to keep a look-out on every train from Exeter and finally to despatch her in a car from——

The C. Y. S. started in his oil-skins in good order with this 'phone and the Rainbow Maker and I began lunch.

Five minutes later, the sound of a car shot me from my chair. I leapt up to see Mr. and Mrs. C. Y. S. arriving as good as gold both together.

It seemed that the news of her non-arrival was merely a jest to kill time on the part of the garage.

We finished lunch amid enthralling speculations as to whether cars were busy meeting every train from Exeter and whether the station-master and staff were scouring the station for Mrs. C. Y. S. We were far past beginning all over again to tell them that she had arrived. After the time I had had, my

un-Christian inclination was to leave them all to it and I did.

This then is the style in which we get our Bluejackets. Please note that we found Mr. C. Y. S., interviewed him, got him demobilised and his furniture out here in thirteen days from the day our advertisement appeared and his wife four days later.

Smart work on everyone's part—but the County won't forget it.

CHAPTER IX

AN OBJECT-LESSON

WITHIN the first week of Mr. C. Y. S.'s arrival the Rainbow Maker unwittingly gave him an object-lesson which demonstrated the need of his services.

In all innocence, she decided that she would send the wheels of her chair to the town for new tyres. This had been waiting so long that the chair was unusable. To obviate all possible delay, Mr. Bluejacket made minute measurements both of wheels and tyres. These measurements were despatched to the garage for noting, and a reply was duly received from there to say the tyres were in stock and the job could be done in a day while we waited.

Imagining that she would only be deprived of her chair for twenty-four hours, the Rainbow Maker caused the wheels to be removed on the Monday evening of Mrs. C. Y. S.'s

arrival. Early the following day, they were driven to the town by the Lily secretary's daddy. From about tea-time, we began in recurring spasms to expect his return. This went on till after dinner, even till it became a question whether or not Mr. C. Y. S. should bolt the gate. I suggested that he had better not and I would see to it the last thing before going to bed. I did—giving bed-time a certain latitude, but still neither Lily's father nor the wheels had been heard of. He could not help passing the house on his way from town and we were faintly uneasy.

Next morning, there was still no news. After post time, a rumour trickled in stating that the wheels were not finished when Lily's father was ready to return so he had left word with a neighbouring farmer who would be in market on Wednesday to bring them along.

On Wednesday evening therefore we were in the same condition of mild expectancy. Nothing happened—as usual. Once more I locked the gate and went late to bed. Next morning, Thursday, there was no news whatever, not even a rumour, so Mr. Bluejacket was despatched to the farm for news. He

returned at Noon with a serene announcement that the farmer had forgotten them. This meant the poor Rainbow Maker would be indoors a week. Flesh and blood could not endure such a prospect, and unknown to her I sallied to the village after lunch to ask Lily's father to make a special journey for them next day at my expense. Then did a dire confession fall upon my astonished ears.

It seems that on the Tuesday evening, the wheels were done. The poor innocent reliable garage had kept faith with us to the tick. Lily's father had even gone to the length of retrieving the wheels and putting them with his other goods to return in his cart. When he went to the Stores to load up, the pony was so bored with existence generally that its one idea was to get home, and it took its master all his time to hold it while a shop-assistant loaded for him. It was pitch dark and needless to say raining in rivers. Also it was just past closing time. Not till he was a long mile out of the town, did Lily's father make the fell discovery that the shopman had forgotten to put in the wheels.

He decided not to go back after them but

to rout out the said farmer who would be leaving for market early next morning. He did—and that was why we did not hear him pass this way. The farmer genuinely forgot them, a thing always easy to Devonians. Lily's father was so appalled by the string of catastrophes that he tamely agreed to take another twenty-four mile ride to town in mid-winter and an open pony cart and bring them home or perish in the attempt. Accordingly on the Friday, he set forth once more with the air of the pretty gentleman in "Excelsior," passing the window as early as 9.30, and we even pictured the wheels safely on the chair by tea-time. As usual the day drifted on and nothing happened, nothing had by the time the C. Y. S. went off duty for the night.

Once more, wondering if I was mad or only if everyone else was, I sat up late and myself bolted the gate. Once more we heard no wanderer's return.

Early next morning I was in the middle of my mail when I received a message that Lily's father would like to speak to me "very particular." I went. He was at the door, enshrouded in funereal gloom. I greeted him

with the exclamation: "You don't mean to say you haven't got them this time!" And he hadn't. They were now genuinely mislaid. Too many people had been trying to get them out and now no one knew what they had done with them. I sat down in a crumpled heap and asked what had happened and what the next move should be.

What had happened was this. Finding that the farmer had forgotten them on Wednesday, some bright spirit saw another farmer, who lives further from us than the original one, in town on the Thursday and had asked him to take the wheels back. He agreed saying they must be at his stabling place at 5 on Thursday. When Lily's daddy reached town on Friday morning he was greeted with the announcement that this farmer had taken them the previous day. He drove twelve miles back to the farmer, which was again the reason why we had not heard him return, to find that as the wheels had not been delivered at the stable by 5 o'clock, naturally the farmer had come without them.

It was rumoured that they had been sent to the wrong stable.

Lily's father then decided to 'phone to the Stores requesting them to scour the stables till the wheels were found, retrieve them, place them under an armed guard and give them to no one till he once more fetched them on the Monday. He accordingly departed on this errand and after lunch I once more sallied to the village for news. None had come but it had transpired that the Stores were not on the 'phone, so Lily's father had wired instead. The reply came latish to say that the wheels had been despatched by Passenger train to our nearest station and that the whole population of the further town was thankful to get rid of them. This shifted the searchlight. Then arose a question of how to get them from the station and when they would arrive there. Lily's father said his blood was so up that he intended to throw all his other business to the wind and call daily at the station—six miles each way—till he got the wheels. On the Sunday of course we all had an enforced rest. Early on the Monday, "Excelsior" once more passed the window to do or die. About four o'clock he returned triumphant with the wheels.

Next morning, before knocking off duty for breakfast, the Chief Yeoman stood very erect in the Hall and remarked in his usual subdued and respectful manner: "From what I have seen in one week, Ma'am, one signaller here is not sufficient. Besides me at Venton you also need another one on the high ground, say at Hey Tor."

And then he melted away to breakfast.

CHAPTER X

THE THATCHER

THE thatcher thatcheth.

To the amateur it might seem a rash and expensive job to thatch a dwelling-house roof in winter. If you get the right winter, it is really the best season, as though the working days are a little shorter, we save much time by not having to carry water. Unless the reed is damp, it cannot be manipulated and the hot sun and drying wind of summer necessitate the fetching of much water in buckets to throw over the nitches. In winter, the rain and atmosphere obligingly supply this need for us and very much more effectually, for they permeate evenly, not merely in patches as do the clumsy efforts of man. There is an old saying here, "Wet weather be best for ducks and datchers," and it is amazing the weather the old man works in.

He is a brave old boy of well over seventy. In fact, seeing he is the only procurable thatcher I try to keep my mind off the fact of how very much over seventy he really is.

With me, he is unfortunately on his good behaviour, which I regret and to which I am entirely unaccustomed. No one ever behaves with me, which is one reason why I learn so much of my fellow-creatures. They have no respect for me and they treat me anyhow. Look at the postman and Mr. Bluejacket and the Chief Yeoman and the children and everybody. Sometimes I try to feel annoyed about it but the Old Thatcher has effectually cured me of ever wishing to be treated with respect. Only twice has he unbent in my presence. Once was when he informed me that we were "a set of blithering fules." You may say that this was a great unbending. I agree that it supplied for many past deficiencies but the occasion justified the searching sum up of our idioccy, and when I agreed with him whole-heartedly and laughed, and laughed and laughed, he seemed quite taken aback. This was the occasion. Two great wagons of reed drawn by splendid horses, and

accompanied by a little army of carters, small boys and excited dogs, arrived from the lowlands, when of course there arose the question where to store it pending the re-roofing. Much of it was thrown into the tallart of the bullock-shippen. The rest was bestowed in my pet little field near the house which contains the shanty of the black piglets. The nitches were thrown down anyhow and the mob departed. Next day, after some consultation with our farm tenant, the Chief Yeoman and I decided that the reed had better be stood up on end, so he spent a happy morning with a prang standing it up. Next day arrived the Old Thatcher, purple with indignation, saying he had actually heard a rumour that we to Venton had been fools enough to stand the reed bottom downwards on the grass. I explained that to the uninitiated mind, bottom downwards would appear to be the correct position in which to stand a thing. Almost speechless, he pointed out that if reed was stood bottom downwards on grass, in three days every straw would have a worm in it and the reed would be done for. There appeared to be no answer so I made none.

Instead, I falteringly inquired who had carried the dire news down away to his distant mill, and it transpired that it came from his impish grandson who is the village telegraph boy and who had seen us at work while passing to deliver a message. I confess it rankled within me that this imp should apparently have known more about the correct position for nitches of reed than I, but I had to endure the rankling. I placed silver compensation into the old man's hand and murmured apologies. The correct position it seems was for the reed to lie on its side, which not only prevents worms but also turns the rain.

The second occasion of the old man's unbending was when I paid him his second week's wages. Naturally, we pay our workmen weekly. At the end of the second week, he grasped this fact and, after thanking me, remarked, "Short debts make long friends." One cold day, Mrs. Chief Yeoman invited him in to have a cup of hot tea and the Chief afterwards informed me that it was delightful to hear the old man unbend. For one thing, he commented sardonically upon the godless Sabbaths kept by the farmers

round here, who always select Sunday mornings on which to ride over the Moors and collect ponies. "Seemeth to me," said he, "that the Lord's Word in this parish is, 'six days shalt thou labour and on the seventh day shalt thou seek colts.'" I would give anything if he would converse with me in this strain, but he won't.

Before the thatcher really gets to work, besides reed, one has to supply him with spear or spar sticks. I am never quite certain how it is pronounced as they speak so fast and no one knows how it is spelt. Anyway, these are the things with which he fastens on the reed. They arrive as bundles of sticks which he pares and sharpens at each end and bends over in the middle to drive into the roof like a large wooden staple. Spear sticks have to be made of halsewood. That is the Dartmoor word for the hazel, and it is customary to give the thatcher the use of a shed or linhay in which to cut his sticks, because by the time the job is done, he has left behind him several barrow-loads of valuable kindling. The thatcher has two weapons, his "beetles," a pair of wooden

blocks with long handles to them and huge curved spikes which make them look like gigantic stag-beetles. These are hooked into the roof when he wants to take a step off the ladder. The other is his "drift" or mallet with which he hammers the reed even. It is a square of elm-wood, chiselled into grooves, and it, too, has the huge hook for fastening into thatch.

The word "reed" is misleading to us aliens in Devon. To me, it suggests a kind of rush or water reed. In reality it is simply straw, and a nitch is a big bundle containing thirty pounds.

This particular bit of roofing began on the Lily-Bed side, and after he had been at work two days, I came out, contemplated the litter and murmured sadly, "And this was once a garden." Of all the messy things in creation, a thatcher is the messiest, except that it is comparatively clean mess, but for sheer untidiness he has no equal. He tears off wisps of old straw and chucks them anywhere, tempering them with old spear sticks. If you are within reach, you may suddenly receive upon your head an avalanche of mutilated



THE OLD THATCHER TO WORK

straw, sharp sticks and handfuls of moss. He cares not where he throws things. He tangles up his reed in my washing-line and drops trails of it among the climbing roses. We are littered from the top of the roof to the ground, and on the ground we pass along our litter to our unoffending neighbours.

Another characteristic of the thatcher is his cloud of satellites. Convoys of wild birds attend him and take the keenest interest in his efforts. Robins, Chaffinches, Golden Glad-dies, Sparrows, all pass the days in his company, which one loves. If he is within radius of the farmyard the entire poultry harem also waits assiduously upon him, which is quite another matter. At first, I began by shooing them out, but it was so utterly useless and my spirit has become so broken that I now stand with folded hands watching the fowls kicking my lily bulbs into mid-air. The other morning I did pluck up one scrap of my old spirit, which was when I found the stag in possession. This was really beyond endurance. I rushed at him, administering such a shock that he took a flying leap over the stone wall before looking where he leapt and

landed plop in the pump trough. To my unholy joy, this so shattered his nerves that he ran screaming across the farmyard announcing at the top of his voice that he had laid an egg.

This afternoon, it being one of those wonderful, mild, mellow, golden, late November days, we took deck-chairs and sat out in the farmyard with knitting to watch the Old Thatcher turn an awkward angle in the roof. The farm children hailed us with rapture, especially three-year-old Margaret who fears nothing. She flirts hotly with the Chief Yeoman and offers him much good advice. On one occasion when he was sweeping up the straw with wheelbarrow and broom, I heard her ask severely where his shovel was as he could not possibly pick up the straw with his hands. He stared helplessly for a time at her but there was no answer and he meekly went off and fetched his shovel. On another occasion when he was cutting wood in our linhay Margaret visited him, of which visits he disapproves as there is danger that the sticks will fly up and hit her in the face.

He opened conversation by asking inhosp-

pitably what she had come for. She answered promptly, "To see you." Two or three times he warned her of the sticks, to which warning she was impervious, so, by way of getting rid of her finally, he said, "Miss Parr is coming. What will she say if she finds you here?"

Margaret responded cheerfully, "Her will only say, 'Hullo, Margaret,'" upon which the Chief Yeoman gave it up, and I consider this the most lurid and complete character sketch of me which has ever been told in one short sentence. The other inhabitant of the farmyard was little cousin Raymond who is younger than Margaret and who, before even being breeched, kept an eye upon my interests. One afternoon he was walking hand-in-hand with a Saint Michael's lady and when they hove in sight of the Chapel, Raymond saw that the garden gate was standing open. At once he released the lady's hand remarking, "Gate is open. HER don't like it left open. I will bide here while you go and shut it."

This afternoon the game in the farmyard was motors represented by some disreputable hoops off an old barrel. We were warned to get out of the way or to be run over. I was

twice run over to Margaret's unhallowed joy.

The Old Thatcher appreciates admiration. After watching him turn his difficult corner, I remarked that I wished I could do it, at which he laughed shortly and remarked, "Ah, *you* won't do it this year." Really it is marvellous to watch him and though one gets some idea of how he works upwards from the eaves to the ridge thus getting the ends like the even pile on furniture plush, I have never yet arrived at how he finishes off at the top. It is a beautiful art and is, alas, dying out. For one thing the youngsters won't learn it, and for another thing, it really has become too expensive to be within the means of any one who does not love beauty more than money.

This coat is being put on top of the old one so our roof will be about eight inches thick when finished and it does look magnificent. Yesterday I heard the Old Thatcher remarking complacently to a farmer that if he could get two fine days, he could finish the job. Judging by the weather to-day, this boon seems likely to be denied him for some

time. When it is done, think of the warmth and golden beauty of this natural covering. It is one of the common daily miracles to which we are so blind. Think that every straw over our heads has come from a grain of wheat which was duly buried a year ago in the rich brown earth, and think of the stages through which that grain has passed before it finally roofs us over.

CHAPTER XI

MY ROSARIES

It is breathlessly still in the White Moorland Chapel that is set like a pearl in the ring of the Dartmoor hills. Hours ago the blood-red lamp silently vanquished daylight and now reigns, peerless, as the brightest star of night. The door of the Chapel stands open as a silent invitation to any passer-by to enter and rest. Many do enter to remain a few minutes and then drift onwards, probably never to return. But to the end of life, and after, they never drift beyond the tide of prayer that pours out over the face of the earth from the humble little wayside shrine.

To-night the wayfarers have ceased their wanderings and so I am alone. Finishing my beads, I happen to look down at the rosary lying in the palm of my left hand: and, as I look, suddenly my hand is full

of countless sanctuary lamps in miniature, reflected from the big lamp overhead in the cut amethyst beads of the rosary.

What an exquisite thing the rosary is! Exquisite, intrinsically and extrinsically, exquisite as prayer, as poetry, as music, as painting.

It may be a babyish fancy but I love to believe that Mary receives a substantial gift every time we sons of the light offer her a chaplet—a spiritual rosary, none the less real but rather more real for being spiritual, a rosary glittering with graces that have the power to add to her own accidental glories in heaven. If it is a babyish thought, well, Mary loves babies and we are, most of us, far too grown up and stiff and formal in the way we treat her. So I am being a baby to-night and imitating my mother as all good babies should. Like Mary, I am gathering together all my rosaries and speaking to her of the donors. Some day, please God, I shall kneel by her side in heaven, to place each of my rosaries in her pure hands with each donor kneeling, safe beside me. Among them are beads

which have been handled by a convict, an empress, and a Pope. To-night I am using the cut amethyst rosary in its little white satin box from Italy. It has a beautiful silver crucifix and tiny old silver medallions of Mary and the saints between each decade. It belonged to a beloved uncle, now dead.

In the same white satin box lives a funny little black wooden rosary to which is attached a roughly carved wooden cross without a figure. It has no sort of business there with My Lady Amethyst and the box is a tight fit for the two of them. But, somehow, the little black wooden beads seem determined to live there, so I humour them and Amethyst does not mind. Indeed she is honoured, for the humble chaplet came from the Holy Land and has been in Our Lord's sepulchre.

Just behind me, hanging comfortably on the back of the bench, is the ruby-red rosary of the Holy Spirit. Why it lives there I don't know, any more than I know why plain Mr. Black Wood lives with My Lady Amethyst. Rosaries are so alive. They have their own little fancies and their own special

homes and far be it from me to thwart them. For years has the ruby-red chaplet hung over the bench back, regardless of all my weak fears that he will get stolen some day by some wayfarer. I love him very dearly for he symbolises Love. Is not the Holy Spirit Himself Uncreated Love? So the beads of His chaplet are love-red, His own colour, and the big beads are peppered with tiny silver stars of light. The attached medal bears the symbols of the Holy Spirit—the Dove hovering over the tiara, crossed keys and open book, and, on the reverse, His Spouse, the Stainless Woman with light streaming from her open hands.

This chaplet was made for me by one of my clever Sisters in the white habit of S. Dominic.

The next rosary is a genuine Dominican and at my death I intend to leave it to the Mother Provincial of this province as a curiosity to be used by the reigning Provincial on special feasts.

It is china and very heavy, though small. The beads are fluted and each bead is half white and half black, the Dominican colours.

As you hold it up one way it appears to be all white. When you reverse it, it is all black. But the strangest thing is the arrangement of the first beads. Instead of this being the one large, three small and one large to which we are accustomed, it is three small, space and then two small. And the second bead from the cross has little arms extending from it. What this means, I do not know. It was given to me by an old lady before I left London. She was a Congregationalist and I was the only Catholic she had ever known. She gave me the rosary before her death begging me to use it and to remember her when I did. She has been dead now many years and not another word could I ever learn of its history or how she came by it. She always refused to tell. I have had it examined by the curator of one of our museums and he is of the opinion that the work is Florentine and at least a hundred years old. So the black and white rosary is recited for her who gave it to me, and for my brethren of the Order and all their intentions.

One of my rosaries is absent from Chapel.

It is a great carved wooden Lourdes rosary that was brought from Lourdes by the Empress Eugenie, given to her old friend and chaplain and by him to me. It is too large for use so it hangs on the landing wall, outside the visitor's room in the tiny spot that was, once, my only indoor oratory.

Only two chaplets are now left to count. One is of cheap brown wood to which is appended a very large steel crucifix. That rosary has been through a term of penal servitude and its cross was blessed for a happy death when the poor owner was lying under sentence of death in the condemned cell. The death sentence was commuted to a life sentence and the brown rosary and big crucifix went with him through more than the decade of tear-stained years, years which broke his heart and saved his soul and turned him out, dying, a gentleman and a saint. We were the first friends of his freedom, and before he went away he gave me the precious rosary. He is now happy in the love of wife and child. We shall never meet again in this world but the brown rosary of the prison cell has found sanctuary

in the Moorland Chapel where it is told, faithfully, for its once owner.

Last is a little box of pink satin bearing the gold word ROMA. The rosary it contains is of cut jasper and was brought to me from Rome by one who wears the sacred purple. He brought it to me straight from the hands of Pius X. who held it and toyed with it during their private audience. Ah, those anointed hands now folded meekly in death! The great father's heart that broke because the crucifix was turned to the wall and Love and Peace were dead!

The first month of War broke the heart of the Peasant Pope and killed him.

Now, Peace has returned and still, in the little White Moorland Chapel at evening, I use the jasper rosary and its every dull red bead might be a drop of blood from my heart.

CHAPTER XII

THROUGH THE WINDOW

It is early. Gray-Eyed Dawn lies late abed these December days and I have breakfasted before she is well awake.

The Window faces east and, this mild December morning, it is covered with pin-pricks of fine warm rain, or at least it pretends to be rain but I think it must really be mist for the wind is not east: either mist or a tiny backwater when a wavelet of wind shook the ivy.

The vivid green of the bank under the Window is littered with straw so golden that, even on a soft dark day like this day, a glow is thrown into one's eyes from the scattered reed. All among it so close that if the casement would open, I could touch them without moving, are alert sparrows and one bright chaffinch with his terracotta waist-coat and electric-blue head and wings tipped

with black and white. He is a wonderful splash of colour. Up along winds and rises the road to the moor gate a few hundred yards ahead. Here and there, the hem of the road's garment is embroidered with dull red haws, scarlet holly-berries and patches of tawny beech leaves.

Further, looms the warm brown Moor seen through her gauze veil of torn white mist.

Besides the chirping of sparrows and the swirl of the ivy in the Cheepery, the only sound is the rustle of the west wind as she floats by to greet Queen Day.

A great, clean, fragrant Peace soaks into every sense and penetrates into one's very bones.

CHAPTER XIII

MY PUBLISHERS

FOR years I have threatened to write a general abstract character-sketch of my publishers and at last the threat will be executed.

I want to present them in the light of the downtrodden race that they are. The outside public considers that it is we poor authors who are the crushed worms but I shall tell another story.

Of course, being a woman, I score. An unprotected woman living her life in a world of men scores all along the line. Here and there one may meet the cad who takes advantage of one's unprotected condition but he is the exception, and the instinct of every normal man in every class who crosses one's path, is to do one service.

I need hardly say that I never insult my publishers by treating with them through an

agent. Some of the happiest and most intimate friendships in life are those between author and publisher, and I would no more insult a publisher by dealing with him through an agent than I would write to my doctor through a servant. There is absolutely nothing to equal the personal attention one receives.

One of my most tried publishers I call the Irrepressible. Another says that I call him "Serpent and other natural history specimens." At first I set out with an indignant denial but then a horrid memory reared its head and I could only murmur feebly, "but it is a quotation."

Yet another is known as His Majesty and to him I give unwonted reverence though he is the most tractable of all.

When I sent the manuscript of the *Book of Answered Prayers* to the Irrepressible, he wrote back saying that as it dealt with Theology, it would have to go before the Diocesan Censor, and did I imagine for one moment that any self-respecting censor would pass such a book?

I retorted that as the censor is a man I

had a strong suspicion he would pass it and of course he did, without taking exception to a word. I decided to emphasise my triumph by getting the name of a Bishop instead of that of the mere ordinary canon for the Imprimatur. One of my bishop friends officiated by return of post with great joy and what the Irrepressible thought of Ecclesiastical censors and Bishops cannot be recorded. He got his last shaft home when the book was published by sending me the following letter.

“The book is now ready for publication and has to be catalogued. It cannot go under *Belles Lettres* because though, as everyone knows, you can write English, you won't. Shall I enter it under spiritual reading or fiction?”

I retorted, “Fiction, of course,” at which he lost his nerve and finally catalogued it as spiritual reading.

When a revised edition of the work came out, he had a fearful time because I wanted to take out old chapters and put in new ones of exactly the same length so as not to interfere with page headings, page number-

ings, and plates. Anyone who has made up a book will sympathise with the life he had. When it was done, what was left of him wrote to me, remarking, "I will never do it again, not even for the Pope himself. If you get any more spasms, they will have to go in a separate volume."

I insisted on this book being originally published at the price of one shilling which included six full-page plates. The Irrepressible spoke up in no uncertain voice. He said if I persisted in anything so wickedly unjust, the publishers would only just make expenses and not even a halfpenny a copy themselves on the book. I retorted that as long as my royalties were paid and the Public got the book at a shilling, no one cared about the publishers, so they published it meekly at this price by the cartload.

The Irrepressible has had a lot of trouble about keeping some of my books in print during the War, and at last he got so sick of them that he wrote saying, "If ——— runs out again it will stay out. I am fed up with trying to keep your books in circulation."

On hearing that another of my books published by another firm had been sold to the number of 45,000 in twelve months, the Irrepressible wrote, "It is amazing what the Public will stand." He has a satellite who is qualifying to become as Irrepressible as himself and last summer this satellite organised what they were pleased to call "Parr Week in Paternoster Row." They gave up a whole window to it and exhibited in it as many of my possessions as I was mad enough to send them. They also had lilies from the Lily Bed and heather from Dream Tor, and the show lasted a week. The Irrepressible's satellite informed me that all my friends went to it and some of my enemies, and when I asked how soon it would be over, he replied: "Parr Week ends with the Solemn Te Deum of thanksgiving on Saturday morning."

On one occasion I was taken very ill and had to go into a private ward in a Devon hospital. Hearing this, the Irrepressible wrote a personal letter enclosing a cheque and praying me not to be angry with him, but private wards cost money and I had no

father to look after me, and I could pay it back any time six months hence out of my next royalty.

Such is Barabbas the publisher.

The Serpent tries at rare and spasmodic intervals to worm another book from me without avail. I tell him, in crude, coarse English, that his royalties are no longer high enough for me. As I refuse to take less and as he refuses to offer more, the deadlock is perfect, but we remain excellent friends and never have a wrong word, which I may hastily record is due to his angelic disposition rather than to mine.

It was he who unwittingly introduced me to His Majesty. The Serpent ordered another book and I lunched with him to discuss it, giving him, in a stunning flow of eloquence, the outline of the book from cover to cover, much to the excitement of a lady lunching at another table who abandoned everything to listen. When I had at last finished, the Serpent said it was exactly the book he wanted and closed with it. In due time I delivered it and then after the manner of the publisher, he wrote and wanted something

quite different. I answered saying that I could write him a different sort of book, but to alter that one would ruin it as it was perfect of its kind and he must either take it as it stood or leave it. He chose to leave it, whereupon I flung it at his poor innocent, unoffending Majesty with whom I had had no previous dealings. He received it with his usual courtesy, and in due course refused it with a charming personal letter saying that though its literary merits would do credit to their house, it was not a book that they could sell in war time so they reluctantly declined it. This annoyed me. I returned it with a brief intimation that if they could not sell the book, I could, and would they kindly get a move on and publish it, wiring me an acceptance next day? At 11 next morning came a meek wire accepting; it had been handed in at 9.30 a.m. It is yet another instance of the triumph of mind over matter, and as the book is now in its fifth edition I consider I was justified in my persistence.

When I notified the beginning of my next book to His Majesty he wrote courteously

back saying he would consider it, and he read it himself and accepted it in forty-eight hours. When the third came along, he wrote by return of post accepting it before a line was written, and when the agreement was signed, of his own freewill he offered me an advance royalty at publication. Thus you see traced step by step the Evolution of the Perfect Publisher under the genial guidance of a woman writer.

His Majesty always sends me a stamped addressed envelope in which to return the signed agreement, and a male author happened to be visiting me one day and saw the envelope. He inquired with much amusement if I imagined that he or any other male author received such attentions. I answered that of course I supposed so, at which he laughed still more.

His Majesty always sends me hand-written letters, and if by some rare chance he has to despatch a dictated typed one, he always apologises for it. The Serpent never sends me any but dictated typed letters, for which I am thankful as he cannot write. The Irrepressible has never sent me a typed

letter in his life and his handwriting is most clear and full of character.

There are publishers who try to buy my copyrights and who have the time of their lives in consequence. I refuse to sell copyright and they refuse to give a royalty agreement. The manuscript flies to and fro between us like a shuttlecock between two battledores until the publisher, having less time and tenacity of purpose than I, gives in, secures it at his end and signs the royalty agreement.

I confided to the Irrepressible that I was about to write this chapter concerning my publishers, and he said he would furnish the most appropriate title for it, which should be "Angels I have met on earth."

CHAPTER XIV

SNEEZING

I DO so wonder why we all sneeze.

A doctor friend who visits the Moor annually on holiday, with his car, sits beside me, driving, and, in a dulcet tenor, murmurs "Bugs," as I sneeze and sneeze and sneeze.

Vainly I urge on him that he is vulgar and that microbes do not inhabit Dartmoor. He, by the way, is the man who says I have only eighteen convolutions in my brain.

I easily outdistance other sneezers for monotonous regularity. I have had to give up anything buttoned near my neck, for I not only sneeze off every button but tear open every button-hole. One sneezes, I find, first with one's neck and then with one's waist.

Having got rid of the collar aggravation, I then only have to keep fastenings on my

waist-belts. If specially busy, I sneeze myself down to one hook and eye, when the Rainbow Maker complains that I am gaping in the rear, so I have to begin sewing them on again. I cannot honestly say that I have always had the full complement of hooks and eyes on every skirt I possess at the same time. Life is too short for this weary business.

Once I actually saw the effect of a sneeze. I was crouched under the poet's corner sheltering from the wind, and a hundred yards ahead grazed a line of ponies. Each were equidistant from the next and they were in single file like boats in station. Suddenly I sneezed at my loudest. A very few seconds later, the leading pony leapt into the air as though shot. Then the next did the same and so on all down the line. I could follow the sound as it struck each as clearly as if it had been a cannon ball. I don't think I ever laughed so much in my life. For sheer despair, the Rainbow Maker's sneezes beat us all. She usually waits till she has just got into bed and then begins. She keeps it up for ten minutes or so, slowly,

resignedly and with a note of utter despair in the sound.

The dogs sneeze. The men sneeze. You hear loud sneezes at intervals from behind hedges where farmers are working.

The most serious case was that of an elderly priest who was visiting here and who offered Mass daily in my Chapel. He began his attacks in the sacristy while unvesting. Never in my life have I heard such a din. It began with a wild yell utterly unlike a sneeze. Then came a series of "oh, oh, OH's," intermingled with anguished moans and another wild yell. Anyone outside must have thought we were murdering him. Three nurses from a big London hospital happened to attend daily Mass just then, and I consulted them as to what they thought and why he seemed to suffer such torments and if it was safe. They said it was safe enough for him but it wouldn't be any more for them, and they would either have to leave the Chapel at once next time it happened or die where they knelt. I explained it was all very well for them but what about me? I have to serve and cannot

leave. They said I should probably die suddenly of seizure, apoplexy or whatever distemper does follow violent suppressed laughter, or else that the old man's dying shrieks, tempered with wild laughter from me, would reach the Bishop's ears and get the Chapel closed.

From which it will be seen that no one is sorry for my troubles and nobody really loves me.

CHAPTER XV

LIFE WITHOUT SERVANTS

THIS article was written and published during the darkest days of war when Blue-jackets were unprocurable. I reproduce it, partly by way of remembering past glories, for never, any winter of my life, have I been in such robust health; partly to recall my unchangeable views as to the sanctity of housework; and lastly, in hope that it may be of some use and comfort to the less lucky woman who is not staffed with Bluejackets.

All my life, of course, I have done a large proportion of the higher branches of housework, such as cooking, fine laundry-work, silver and brass cleaning, and many other things. Now, however, I have boldly attacked the roughest and dirtiest departments, such as cleaning knives, black-leading and scrubbing; and the more I do of it the more my misogynism is confirmed. It is not until an intelligent woman

does things herself that she plumbs to its depths the half-witted incompetence of even the best type of female domestic servant. I have always maintained that housecraft requires the highest form of intellect, which is why many lower-class women are unable to do it; and now I am certain of the truth of my theory. They do their work without using any mental power about it. They behave like machines, and when there comes one of those unforeseen emergencies which occur constantly in every house they are thrown off the line for the day. Apart from emergencies, through lack of brain power, they make double the labour out of every task; and, for the same reason, as soon as anything is clean, they begin to mess it up again. The Rainbow Maker has always remarked, "It is the servant who makes the work and the dirt." I find it is literally true. She also remarks, "God sends the food, and the devil sends the cook!" That is, no doubt, truer; but as no servants in Europe can cook for us, we are spared that particular torment.

For instance, take grates, fires and stoves. I now clean one grate every day, without

missing. I do it in twelve minutes, from the time I spread the grate-wrapper till the new fire is laid. This includes going over the cobbitt, fire-irons and handsome black iron kettle with the black-lead brush. Every scrap of cinder is taken away, the bars are clear for the draught—a new experience. All the ironwork shines with polish—also a new experience—and the fire is laid in a way that can allow it to burn. When a servant cleans a grate she first leaves the bars choked, and then, hermetically to seal the necessary under-draught, she relays the fire with a mass of cinders under the paper. Then we all go mad with smoke, and the clean rooms are ruined. You explain till you are hoarse that fires require to breathe as we do; but you cannot teach her. She always has laid a fire with an impenetrable layer of cinders under it, and she will continue to do so. Then she tries to counteract this folly by using double the necessary amount of wood and paper. Flues are, of course, nearly every servant's stumbling-block. She would rather be smoked out, have to clean the kitchen, be unable to cook anything or to get any hot water, than

clean her flues. The blacksmith told me this summer that in the busiest harvest season, when he was working from dawn till dark at the machinery and shoeing, he had to lose many half-days wanted for this important work "to run the country" on all sides in response to dirges from ladies round about, saying their stoves would not burn, and they could get no food. In every case, he told me, the slut of a servant had got the flues choked solid with soot, and the fool of a mistress had not even known it. In no instance was there anything whatever wrong with the stove. Well, to me, there is a high satisfaction, not to mention pride, in cleaning out a grate, making it look beautiful, and lighting a fire which will burn. When I have done it, I am conscious of successful intellectual achievement. I wear a long blue pinafore reaching from my chin to my toes, a blue sun-bonnet, and a pair of special grate-gloves made, by a clever young friend of mine, of American cloth, which is much more satisfactory than wash-leather, as it permits no kind of leakage. I have caps, of course, for ordinary housework, such as sweeping

and dusting; but for real filthy work, like grates, there is nothing to touch the old-fashioned sun-bonnet. The valance comes down beyond the nape of the neck; the ears are also completely covered; you can pull it down over the eyes in front, and the strings prevent any displacement. Added to this, it is quaintly picturesque. In addition to the dirty work in which the grate itself is only half-cleaned, there is the aggravation of the dust which a servant lets loose all over the room in taking up ashes. I never knew that it was possible to clean a grate without even having to dust the mantelpiece; but I find it is. I open the door of the room and an opposite window wide before I begin. This creates a draught which blows the ash up the chimney instead of all over the room. I must in honesty confess that I did not invent this patent. It was taught me by the local chimney-sweep, who declines to begin his operations till door and window are wide open and a draught established. If you try to teach this to a servant, she prefers to produce a fog of ash all over the room, and then either to dust everything or else leave it dirty.

Again, there is a sense of intellectual delight in cleaning a grate without making any mess. Without intellect the thing cannot be done.

This intellectual effort applies not only to each task, but to the programme of the entire day. It produces a maximum of well-done work at a minimum of fatigue and time expenditure. Instead of doing a dab here and a dab there, as many servants do, I have certain hours when I am doing housework, and in an hour I do what they would take three hours over. For instance, in the evening hour of preparing dinner I start all my stoves and pans, and then clean the grate-ready for the morning. The stoves and pans cannot be left entirely, yet they do not require more than intermittent attention, so that several things can be done at the same time. When the grate is finished I attend to buckets and cans, which means several journeys into the open. Thus half-an-hour of morning work is done in the evening dinner-hour, and when I descend to get breakfast ready there is a blazing fire in two minutes.

Washing-up is another trouble over which servants waste much time. To begin with,

they, too often, wash up all the dirtiest and greasiest things first, and glass and silver last in a thick pea-soup of grease, coffee-grounds, tea-leaves, lumps of fat, and every other solid matter they can get together. Then they take an extra half-hour to polish silver and glasses, or else we use both in a sickeningly smeared condition. When an intellectual woman washes up, she begins with glass, continues with silver, and works on to sauce-pans last. I find it is a mistake to wash up after every meal. Washing-up is always the greatest problem of housework, for the very reason that it inevitably comes after a meal, when one ought not to be exerting one's self. After various experiments, I find it is better to have two washings-up a day rather than four; and the greatest mistake of all is washing-up after dinner in the evening, which is the chief meal, when one is most tired. So I leave dinner-things in soak till morning, and then do them and breakfast-things together. Exertion at that time in the morning matters much less. Lunch things are left, and done after tea with tea-things. Tea is a lighter meal than lunch,

and exertion then is again the minimum of injury. At that hour I also prepare everything for dinner, so as not to have to start all over again in half-an-hour or so. Thus I get a good spell off duty, and only have to put a match at dinner-time to the oil-stoves, on which every pan is ready. I find that the butter, milk, cream and fat in washing-up water are extremely good for the hands, and are a preventive of chilblains. After finishing, I wash my hands in very hot water, and then rub on a lotion of lemon-and-glycerine. After peeling vegetables, especially onions, to get rid of the odour, particularly about one's nails, I use a little bottle of essence of lemon, into which I dip each finger-tip. This entirely does away with any odour, and also whitens the skin.

Another problem is the answering of the door. This I have solved to my own satisfaction, if not to my friends ! When anyone calls at the hour which would throw out some domestic task, I say politely, "I am sorry I am not at home." "I have just begun washing-up and the water is getting cold. Can you come again ?" No one appears to mind.

Sometimes it happens the caller only wants to know something which I can tell him at once. Before meals I plant upon the step, anchored by a boulder, a legend in large type, "Not at home till——. Please shut and fasten the gate." I found, if I were to preserve my health, that this was absolutely necessary. No one can be disturbed constantly at meals without serious suffering eventually. I think people, as a whole, prefer these methods. No one wants to be a nuisance, or to cause me suffering; and then people are sure when they are asked in that I really do want to see them.

There are many little dodges by which an intelligent woman can minimise fatigue. One is to wear heelless shoes when engaged in household tasks. These are restful to both the feet and the spine, and for some reason one can get about at double the pace without heels. Very prettily cut shoes can now be had in velvet and satin in lovely colours such as cinnamon, turquoise, crimson, pink, violet, rose, gray; and, if desired, they can be changed for heels when one has finished. After a task which has meant standing for

some time, I always sit in an easy-chair and put my feet up as high as my head on another chair, padded with cushions, with a specially big cushion under the knees. Five minutes of this makes one feel perfectly fresh. It not only rests the feet and legs, but eases the the heart enormously. If possible, I do it in sun and fresh air. A book for these few minutes is part of the dodge. To read even a few pages switches the mental current along a new line, so to speak—a line which has been resting for several hours and is perfectly fresh. One way to remain perennially fresh is to change the mental current frequently along rested lines. Another good dodge after fatigue or being indoors is to stand at the open door and breathe deeply for twelve breaths, especially before going to bed. Servants, of course, do none of these things. They require intellect and education.

For me there is art and beauty in house-craft which cannot be attained by any other means. What ideal can be more beautiful than to serve those we love with our own hands? What in life is more sacred than home? Home means health for the family,

and families mean the nation. What work could be more sublime? I hope the day is coming when thoroughbred women, like the noble ladies of medieval times, will return again to their own, and will count it a disgrace to let their kinsfolk and their guests be served by menial hands. Let the plebeian women go out daily to what they are pleased to call man's work. It is all many of them are fit for. But, in heaven's name, let us patricians awake to our birthright, and see to it that only ourselves, the high priestesses, minister in the sacred sanctuary of Home.

CHAPTER XVI

MONEY TRANSACTIONS WITH THE RAINBOW MAKER

THE Rainbow Maker and I have been having some money transactions in which she suffered the worst reverses.

It began on Wednesday. I suddenly became cleaned out of all money in every form. I borrowed two pounds from her and in addition owed her six shillings.

On Thursday morning, an unexpected two shillings dribbled in so I paid her this on account. Later in the day, I found sixpence in the chapel box, mostly in pennies, so as I owed Mrs. C. Y. S. fourpence-halfpenny for a loaf, I paid this and kept three-halfpence.

Then I scraped up another two shillings, I forget how, and paid the Rainbow Maker that, thus reducing my debt to two guineas.

Next day, Friday, I began the day by borrowing a penny. This was to send a child

with a wire at 9 a.m. The wire I didn't even try to pay for. Our postmistress understands me.

At 9.30 my Lily Secretary arrived with a penny change for me from the previous day. By the way, I forget what I had done with the three-halfpence left over from the loaf. I paid Lily's penny to the Rainbow Maker and then palped till the butcher arrived with five pounds in cash for me. I treat him abominably. Every week I collar all his cash. I produce a supply of cheques of varying amounts and offer him his choice. He tries to take the lowest tender and I always egg him on to take the highest. One week he declined to take any. He said he had brought a pocket-book full of notes to pay for sheep with. Hearing this, I instantly selected my largest cheque and gave him no choice. He passed.

"But you MUST," I wailed. "I haven't a penny-piece."

So he did and paid for the sheep with my cheque. What the farmer said is happily not recorded.

This particular Friday, after he had cashed my cheque, I paid the Rainbow Maker her two pounds and then started to clear up the small

fry. In the morning after the penny transaction, I had had to abstract a florin from her bag unknown to her for another telegram and loaf. Then the coalie arrived with a parcel from the station for me so I had to sneak another shilling for him. He scored by the way, because the Rainbow Maker, not knowing this, also paid him a shilling on my behalf.

Query, how much small cash did I then owe the Rainbow Maker?

Quite easy. The original two shillings, the coalie's shilling, her shilling to the coalie on my behalf, and my two shillings for the wire and loaf, six shillings in all. I proceeded to pay and then found that the butcher had only left me five shillings in cash, the rest being paper. The Rainbow Maker, who felt she had had enough of my fun, suggested that I should let her cash another note of the butcher's but I refused, gave her the two half-crowns on account and said I would go as a last resource and see if there was a shilling in the chapel box. When I am starved out, I run to that box, trembling. The Rainbow Maker said on the whole she thought she would rather leave it till I was in a position to pay the whole six bob, so she

handed me back the butcher's two half-crowns and went to bed.

When I was again disengaged, I returned to the chapel box and found a florin in it. That I took to the Rainbow Maker in her bedroom and said if she could give me a shilling, all would be squared.

At that the crushed worm turned and spoke up at last in no uncertain voice.

She said, "Look here. You took away those two half-crowns. WILL you go and get that note and pay up? I haven't the dimmest idea now what you owe me and I am sure you haven't."

I staggered away, fetched back the two half-crowns, gave her the florin, took away a shilling and never again, as long as I live, will I borrow money from the Rainbow Maker.

I would rather cash a cheque by subscription in the village.

CHAPTER XVII

THE EFFECT OF OUR NOTICES

As I have elsewhere stated, in consequence of the behaviour of some trippers we are compelled to erect deplorable notices in order to live at all during the tripper season, otherwise we should have to pay one man full wages to do nothing else but control them.

It is, as I say, deplorable that we should be driven to this, and each notice is the outcome of long and hideous experience.

Like other evils, the notices have a funny side which I realised yesterday when sitting out early after lunch in the little field in sight of the house. The luncheon hour is always the pet time for trippers, even above all other meal-times, why we have never been able to imagine because no public conveyance reaches here anywhere about that time.

It was one of those marvellous still, clear days of sun and frost which fade just before

two o'clock, so I bolted lunch and got into the field for one golden half-hour of the Radiant Heat and Light Cure at 1.15. Unexpectedly, I was able to see from beginning to end the effect of our horrible notices upon a really nice visitor.

The lady arrived down the road on foot in joyous anticipation of her visit and the first shock was the sight of this gate with its offensive command, "Fasten this Gate." We are so worn out by years of polite requests to shut the gate which either had no effect or resulted in its merely being pulled to and not fastened, that we substituted the word "fasten" for "shut" and dropped "Please," deciding that anyone so thoughtless as to leave the gate open was not worth politeness. Even now someone is constantly having to go out and fasten the gate if we want to keep a flower in the garden.

Confronted with this inhospitable legend for her arrival, the lady nervously decided not to risk that entrance, so she went round to the front gate to find that uncompromisingly padlocked. We have had to chain and padlock every entrance but one in order to keep even

the house free of these pests who walk clean into any and every room without knocking if they find any outer door open. Even our unfortunate farmer's wife cannot go out into her own farmyard without first bolting her front door, as if she does, she finds some female not merely in the entrance but in her kitchen.

Still further unnerved by the padlock, the visitor then passed on to the farm to find that only a farm and not us, so she had unwillingly to return to the original gate and pass through it. At the bell handle, she found our next protective notice stating that strangers are not received in the morning and that the Chapel is open, with instructions not to ring at any time unless an answer is imperative. The further elaborate directions about dogs and children fortunately did not affect her as she had neither. Exception has been taken to the order of the words on this notice because dogs are put before children, to which exception I retort that when children are permitted by their parents to gallop up and down with muddy boots on the altar carpet and drag the altar cloth to the floor, I prefer dogs.

The notice by the bell is a permanent one.

This is because all the aggravations it guards against are chronic. In addition to the permanent safeguards, we also have special moveable framed ones which are hung out at certain hours when the annoyance becomes acute. As it was, unfortunately, lunch time, besides the permanent notice at the bell handle, this unfortunate visitor was confronted with the "Meal notice," which is hung out before each meal in the forlorn hope that some of us will be allowed something to eat. We began this practice with a polite "Not at home," but as women, in the face of it, would stand and ring the bell for three-quarters of an hour, politeness was once more thrown away and we had to sharpen up our remarks, which now read "Not at home. Don't ring as the bell will not be answered." Even now they still ring and one pair of females had the shock of their lives one lunch time when, in response to their ring, I put my head out and said, "I am so sorry for people who are unable to read. That notice says 'Don't ring as bell will not be answered.'" They stood gasping as I shut and locked the door in their faces.

This notice entirely finished yesterday's

visitor. She then tottered into Chapel to be immediately confronted with the worst one of all, fastened on the inner door of the Chapel. "Locked. Don't try door as it damages lock." This notice was put up because within a month of fixing a new Yale with three latch-keys, I was obliged to have out a locksmith by car and an entirely new lock fixed with new keys on account of the banging and hammering and endeavours to force it with other keys on the part of these well-bred women. This notice has proved so entirely ineffectual, that it has now been removed and Mr. Chief Yeoman and I have concocted a padlock and staples, one staple in the door-jamb and the other in the door. This is so contrived that when the tripper female hurls her whole weight upon the door, the pull is taken by the padlock instead of as hitherto upon the Yale. A stout padlock is less easily damaged than a delicate Yale lock and can also be more easily replaced.

The Rainbow Maker and I have spirited discussions as to which of all our notices is the most objectionable. She votes for the meal label but I pin my convictions on the Chapel door label chiefly because it *is* upon the inner

door of a Chapel and is a proof that people deliberately intend to damage a sacred place.

The poor lady collapsed on the ante-chapel bench for some time and when sufficiently restored, she slunk down to Mr. Chief Yeoman's cottage where she found his nephew, a young Bluejacket on leave from H.M.S. *Tiger*. From him she borrowed a pencil and a scrap of paper and wrote a forgiving note saying she had been ; but who was she to intrude upon my privacy ? She gave the finished note to the young Bluejacket charging him on no account to deliver it to me till after she had had a full half-hour's start after returning to the village ! Then she slunk back to the ante-chapel where I providentially found her and we came in and had a glorious tell in the Room of Sunshine.

I shall never forget sitting in that field watching the effect of the notices upon a sensitive disposition. It was something like watching the effect of my Sneeze upon the row of ponies.

The really funny thing about our notices is that they are done for me by a highly aristocratic friend in London who receives them at intervals as each becomes necessary. He goes with them to a high-class stationer who gets

them beautifully lettered and framed. When the last reached him, the hideous thing about the Chapel lock, it suddenly occurred to me to wonder what the high-class stationer thought, knowing my friend's position.

I asked, "Does that wretched man want to know if you have fallen among aboriginal savages in your old age?"

Upon which it transpired that the stationer says absolutely nothing, which marks him as a man of iron nerve and highly artistic perceptions.

CHAPTER XVIII

THE EFFECT OF THE MOOR ON MANKIND

WHEN friends see our notices and hear our tales of woe, they ask, "But why on earth do such bounders come to Dartmoor?" It is an interesting psychological study and to me it is one of the most cheering things in life. I think there would be a general agreement that it would scarcely be possible to find a more vulgar, coarser-natured type of woman than the one who compels me above all other people in the world, to plaster the house and chapel with such notices. This being so, the perpetual question is asked, "Why do they come?" There can only be one answer: they come because Dartmoor attracts them. Therefore they cannot be wholly coarse and vulgar. It is the very last type in the Kingdom whom one would imagine would care for anything but niggers and the sands. Yet they do

care. They care enough to come in the first instance. After getting here, they care enough to stay. They care enough to come again and they unquestionably love it whilst they are here.

One long summer, the Rainbow Maker for curiosity sat certain hours every afternoon at the open door receiving the mob and asking each one why she had come. There were two invariable answers. Some few said, "We have read Oxenham's book and we wanted to see HER." Others, the majority, said, "We have read that Window Book and we want to see the Window." Again, can you imagine either of those books appealing to that type? Yet they appealed sufficiently to bring them here.

I may seem too idealistic but to me this phenomenon is one of the most powerful reasons for the preservation of Dartmoor.

Industrialism is not the only national asset. It is of incalculable value, moral and economic value, to awaken or preserve the sense of beauty in human nature. A place which does this to such a large extent and which appeals so unanimously is a priceless

national asset, apart from its health-giving and nerve-resting attributes. The theme could be developed endlessly, and each one of us can work out the effect that a love of Dartmoor has upon a life and mind. Dartmoor stands for unspoilt and magnificent creation fresh from the hand of God. No one can love Dartmoor without loving even if only unconsciously the Mind and the Power that conceived and created it. Think of the effect of this one attribute alone upon humanity.

Elsewhere I have described the effect of the Moor upon a child from the East End of London. Its effect is the same upon everyone, of either sex and any age and class. Mr. Bluejacket—and Bluejackets are supposed to be unable to live away from the sea—has already been here over six years and never exhibits the slightest desire to depart. His family are the same and frequently refuse to take a few days' holiday, even when they have the opportunity. Mr. Chief Yeoman is really as mad about the place as I am. He longs even for a little patch of land all his own because it would be Dartmoor land. He once confided this to

me, while gardening, and I asked what he would do with it, and apparently he would just keep it and love it and hug it because it was Dartmoor !

I cannot count the scores of pathetic letters which I receive in the course of a year from people praying me to find them even one room to anchor them to our beloved Moor.

I have always been a robust optimist concerning the good in human nature, but I think the appeal of Dartmoor to the multitude is the strongest proof of the justification of my optimism that can be given.

CHAPTER XIX

A WINTER LANE

THE golden wine of this glorious summer has been saved for November. The amber essence is overhead, underfoot, everywhere. Sun and summer show us nothing of their joint vintage when they are at work together but, like the true friends they are, leave it stored behind them to gladden us after their enforced departure till they return again.

Green leaves, fully clothed trees, show nothing of the Sun's embraces. Now, in mid-winter, one can see where his every kiss was pressed.

Everything is gold. Sloe leaves are pale lemon gold, surrounding their blue-black berries; the hawthorn leaves are browner gold; the chestnuts are fire gold—almost vermilion in places; even the sycamores have put on the prevailing colour. So have the roses and the ashes.

I never knew the ashes could turn if they wanted to. But there is one large ash at the foot of the big hill which almost makes one gasp. She is lemon gold from topmost twig to trunk—a poet's dream of form and colour. The Moor is vivid russet, just the shade of the red cattle and the bracken, oh the bracken! Light incarnate everywhere. She has taken every shade from every tree and even to all those she has added half-a-dozen shades of her own.

The lane is ankle deep in orange pine-needles which lie also in glowing little piles on the tops of the gray stone walls. As the golden road narrows into perspective, the glow intensifies till one might be walking right into the land of the setting sun. Beside it, the clear amber-brown river laughs and babbles on her way to the sea.

So King Sun, when he has to leave us, bequeaths all his hottest kisses, materialised, to this land which he loves so well, and Summer, his bride, at their union, has poured her wines of red and gold.

It makes me think of a man who once said, "Beatrice, one day you shall drink

with me a glass of wine as red as your heart and another as gold as your hair."

That promise has yet to be fulfilled but fulfilled it shall be, whether here or in the other Heaven.

CHAPTER XX

THE ARTIST JEWELLER

I HAVE a wonderful friend. She occupies a unique position in my heart, chiefly because she is herself unique. Viewed correctly, the jeweller's skill is one of the most ancient, honoured and exquisite in the world, but she is something more than an ordinary jeweller. For want of a better phrase I can only describe her as the Artist Jeweller. She is an artist to her finger-tips and she expresses herself in gold, silver, precious metals and rare gems.

Always I have hankered for close acquaintance with a jeweller. From my earliest days, all those passages of Scripture dealing with precious stones have been my favourites. They fired my childish imagination and the fire has waxed with my growth. Probably it has been done, though I have not met it, but I have always thought that a glossary

of all the mentions of precious stones in the Bible would make a wonderful book. The beauty, the mysticism, the mystery and the symbolism of precious stones appeal to my mind in a way that is difficult to describe. It is an emotion common to humanity. Another branch of the craft which I love is the engraver and refiner of silver. The metaphor of the silver refiner who sits before his little furnace watching the purification of the molten metal till that point when he can see his own image reflected in it, is so perfect a picture of the soul's growth in purification.

Whenever I have a seal or a coat-of-arms or a device engraved on a ring or button, I study them endlessly, wondering how it is done. One is so impressed by the education which is necessary before anyone can handle the various branches of this exquisite art. Take drawing alone; how wonderfully a jeweller engraver must be able to draw before he can attempt the higher branches of his art! Again, he must cultivate an eye for colour and form. Yes, I think my definition "the Artist Jeweller" is the best.

At first, I was very much afraid of my friend. She can wear an air of much sternness, and when as I politely put it to her she looks murder at me out of both eyes through her pince-nez, I quail. It annoys her to be told this. It annoys her to hear that I am afraid of her, for which reason I record it. If I have annoyed a friend, I feel my day has not been misspent. After a very long time, during which I studied her from every angle, I have ceased to be afraid of her. "Perfect love casteth out fear." She is one of the strong silent ones, far more like a man than a woman. Sometimes I even rudely call her a cave-dweller. Well, strong silent ones and cave-dwellers give me a frightful lot of trouble to analyse. I have to dig and dig and search and search, and more than half my time the clue is a false one. My position really is a difficult one in relation to my fellow-creatures though no one understands and no one is sorry for me. As I explain to these people, they know everything there is to know about me the first time they set eyes on me, even before they set eyes on me. I live with every door and

window of my soul wide open and am as easily read as A B C. Hence everyone who comes to see me has me at a disadvantage. They are strangers to me while I am a familiar friend to them. This dear lady has given me more trouble to sum up than any human being I have ever met but I think I have got her now.

Her first gift to me was a ruby for my birth month, and in the case was an inscription which made me blush at my own unworthiness and which I keep all by itself in a beautiful little olive-wood box from Jerusalem to read when I need a doing. Her words hit me straight between the eyes.

The next gift was one already described elsewhere, the Heavenly Cross suspended on its chain of endless tiny stars. Here is where my friend is so wonderful. She expresses for us our joys and sorrows as gifts to one another. Falteringly, at some crisis in life, we go to her, tell her what has happened and what we want. She catches the half elaborated idea and exquisitely expresses it. A dear old Knight longed to give me a cross from Heaven, a cross

composed of the twelve foundations of the Heavenly City. He confided his yearnings to this lady, who materialised them in an exquisite jewelled symbol which is a joy to all who see it. No one can imagine that cross. We never can make up our minds where it looks best. Whether out on the Moor in bright sunshine, flashing in the firelight, glowing under a lamp, or giving out a concentrated light of its own in a nearly dark room. I think this last is its most wonderful phase. It appears to contain a light which is almost phosphorescent and which it gives out when no other light is present. Then it is so mysterious, so wonderful. One ponders, enthralled, upon the stores and sources of its light, upon the hidden age and history of its every stone.

The most wonderful of its stones is the jacinth, which is clear, sparkling, liquid wine colour, just the shade of a wallflower petal. The chalcedony is another mysterious stone, half clear and half opaque with a horizontal line across it something like a cat's eye. It contains one fiery spark of emerald green whose elusiveness is its chief charm. For days

together, this spark will not appear. On other days it shines on everyone. Sometimes it will appear when asked to for some admirer, at others no amount of coaxing, warming and cosseting will induce it to show up.

My friend's next work of art was the Rose Chalice now used at every Mass in my chapel. This is the most sacred thing she has ever done for me and is in memory of my Flower of all the Knights, my Hero of the Rose, who was the first to go west. His whole passion was the Rose and all that the Rose stood for in poetry, chivalry, art, symbolism, mysticism and love. We decided therefore that his most fitting memorial should be something closely connected with the SUPREME ROSE, "The red, red passionate Rose of the Sacred Blood of the Christ in the shining Chalice of God, the Cup of the Holy Grail." To contain this supreme Rose she fashioned a pure silver chalice, silver because it is the whitest metal, unadorned by any engraving so that the five roses on this cup should stand out more clearly. These five roses are in honour of the Five Wounds and each has a glowing

carbuncle for its heart. On the foot is the Hero's name surmounted by a crown, not a wreath, of olive. This is an exquisite little design in which the leaves of the olive form the points of the crown, and the fruit, its jewels. This chalice will be the Holy Grail of many lives among those ardent young souls whose whole ideal is one day to lift the chalice with anointed hands between earth and Heaven.

Next came the Rose Lamp, another thing which we believe to be unique. It is an exquisite model of the Rose of Lancaster in hammered silver with a big carbuncle in its centre and another in the reflector at the top. The petals curve upwards and fold over to show the ruby glass with the ever burning tongue of flame, and the whole is suspended by crimson silk cords typifying the cords of love. This sanctuary lamp burns day and night in the white Chapel on Dartmoor.

For my birthday came more unique presents, one from herself and one which she executed for another friend. Seeing my craze for the jacinth, this valiant lady presented

me with a pair of jacinth ear-studs in a wonderful shade of aquamarine blue. She had one and scoured Europe for a fellow. They are exquisite stones of this lovely shade of silvery sea or moonlight blue, but they are entirely different to the aquamarine in their liquidity which is equal to that of a diamond, and they are cut like diamonds. These too are glorious in sunshine and possess the strange luminous attribute of the Heavenly Cross.

The other birthday gift was the badge of the Rose and the lily in jewelled enamel. The fleur-de-lis in white enamel shaded with gold is the central object and it contains the red Rose of Lancaster set with rubies in the very heart of the lily. Tiny platinum chains set with rubies suspend it to a larger red rose and the whole is encircled with a wreath of olive in green enamel, studded with exquisite little pearls to represent the ripe olives.

I often wonder what it must feel like to be able to execute such works of art, to express beauty and virtue materially so that our eyes may actually see purity, peace and love.

CHAPTER XXI

MOORLAND MIST

It was wonderful this afternoon on Buckland Beacon.

I set off at half-past one and before I reached the top of Chittleford Hill, the Moor had drawn her curtains of white mist close around her and me. One could see, through this veil, as far as perhaps twenty yards ahead and then creation was merged in formless white. Of course there was no suggestion of the hills. One could not see the dimmest outline. I could not even see the rocks of the beacon till I was almost on them, and then they loomed so ethereal in the mist, it was difficult to believe they were solid granite. I sat in that nook, under the highest point, with my face to the south; the turf and boulders were visible as far as the edge and then—the formless white world. A strong easterly breeze was blowing all the time which

made its own music in one's ears and kept away other sounds as the mist veiled other sights. There was not a living thing, not even a pony to be seen all the way.

Last month I had a drive which I shall never forget. For pure restfulness, it surpassed any other I have ever done. I had been to town and was unexpectedly delayed till half-past five. By then of course it was dark and added to the darkness was dense fog, driving rain and a violent warm southerly gale. The world was quite blotted out even before we reached Turnpike house and there left the high road for the narrow Moor one. The driver only had one lamp with him which he lighted and put on the off side. The roads were very heavy, the twelve miles very long and as most of the road is up-hill, the progress was very slow. I rolled myself in my rug and cloak, unsociably made a tent of my umbrella between me and the driver, and we spoke not one word the whole way. If I had been taking any part, any active part, in the drive, it would have spoilt all the pleasure. I was entirely passive and resting and sitting with my back to the horse.

I could not see even the small radius of light cast by the lamp. I looked into a world of dark white. This sounds paradoxical. When you have seen a Dartmoor fog at night, you will know that it is not. There was no form anywhere—only impenetrable darkness which was dark yet white. The wind was such that I could not even hear the horse. From time to time an additional roar and chaos of sound overhead told me that we were passing one or other of the fir woods which edge the road. That was all.

I was being borne passively home, warm, happy, secure with immensity above, below, behind, around me. No form for the eye to rest on, yet something definite to see. No sound in the ears yet something most definite to hear.

The first light was the glow from the Dartmoor Window, breaking, orange-tinted, through the mist.

After dinner, the mist and rain cleared and I sat in the open casement, looking up at the Plough and listening to the bells, chiming, in a leisurely way, from the old tower.

CHAPTER XXII

AQUINATE THE PENSIONER

MY old typewriter devil, Aquinate Remington, is pensioned. The Rainbow Maker remains faithful to him but I abandoned him a year ago when I set up a Liliputius Blick, twin brother to Lily's Liliputia.

Aquinate really was intolerable to anyone with anything to do. He is funny enough in a book but in real life—no.

Liliputius, needless to record, does not imitate his tricks. Liliputius confines himself to crops of ordinary errors, not to elaborate and libellous jests by means of changing one letter.

Liliputius tried it once and only once. I was writing a phrase containing the words "Soul union." Liliputius rendered it "Soul onion." I put my foot down then and there and nothing of the kind has ever happened since.

Aquinate's latest is the worst he has ever done.

The Rainbow Maker was lately writing by him to a friend of hers called Mrs. Woodhouse.

Next time the lady forgivingly called upon us, she produced the letter which began sedately, "Dear Mrs. Woodlouse."

HELP!

CHAPTER XXIII

ABERRATIONS

I HAVE made some pointed remarks, in former years, about the mental and reminiscent incapacity of the moorlanders. It is not always that they forget, as the two following incidents will show. Without warning, they branch out into the higher lines of mental deficiency.

One Saturday, when the laundry was returned, a duster was found to be missing. It is always either a duster or a tea-cloth, because they are the two most vital articles. The absence of a duster annoys Mr. Bluejacket and that of a tea-cloth preys upon the nervous force of Mr. Chief Yeoman, who is the cleanest washer-up in the Empire.

I lifted up my voice and announced to creation at large that a duster was missing. Nothing happened on the Sunday, but on

Monday forenoon, a telegram arrived, together with a small newspaper roll, which contained the erring duster.

First query for students of the various highly advertised courses of mental training: Why should a missing duster return with a non-missing telegram, and what connection was there between the two articles?

A few days later, the Rainbow Maker sent a note to the Vicar and in due course he appeared in response. After the usual greetings, he observed with a twinkle: "I received something else with your note which I am quite at a loss to account for."

He then drew out, by slow and sensational degrees, from his breast pocket, our bottle of carbonate of soda.

Second query for mental students: How did the bottle whose dwelling-place is the dresser cupboard reach the Vicar, and what connection was there in the mind which delivered it between:

a. The Vicar.

b. The carbonate of soda.

Speaking of Mental Training, I lately received a letter from a lady examiner whose

rôle in life is to correct the mental students' examination papers.

She began by omitting any date, followed by an urgent caution to note her new address, which was not easy to the untrained elementary mind because she had not put any address.

In the course of her letter, she reproved me for making game of mental training and urged me to go in for a course, concluding with the remark that my full name always reminds her of Reading.

With some difficulty, I traced her through her old address and wrote urgently to know *why* my full name reminds her of Reading, to which question she has never replied, so it might make the third for the Mental Students' Examination Paper. It is altogether beyond me.

CHAPTER XXIV

ANOTHER SIDE OF THE RAINBOW MAKER

I THINK it is time that light was shed upon another side of the Rainbow Maker's character. Till now, everyone has, very properly, pitied her for having to live with me. Now, you will see that I too have something to endure.

It may be remembered that in another of my books, I published a chapter called "Dartmoor (K)nights," concerning a Night Club for men which she held.

The following letter written to an old friend at Archbishop's House refers to the Club. Let me state that I consider it a highly irreverent letter and it is the style which I indite for choice to a Bishop. It is so good for Bishops to have a little startling impiety as an antidote to their monotonously respectable lives.

"The Rainbow Maker is at the chase

again. It has taken (for me) a dire form. She has started a Clothing Club for women and children each of whom has a card. Needless to say, I do the cards because the Rainbow Maker can't write, poor thing. (She never could.) And the result is I am like the man who read the lines :

‘Punch in the presence of the passenjare.’

I suppose you know Mark Twain's story ?

“When I close my eyes to pray, I see red squares—for the figures. When I endeavour to recite Office or the rosary, it is something after this style. ‘O Lord, make haste to help me.’ (Members must always bring their cards.) ‘Lord, hear my prayer.’ (They can have from a manufactory, any kind of woollen or other goods.) ‘And let my cry come unto Thee.’ (For every shilling paid in, twopence will be added as interest.)

“In addition to this waking nightmare, she has also set going, the working man's Reading Room which did not annoy me at first. Now, however, she is hurtling into a Sunday class. As the class can't be called a class for fear of its seeming too preachy, or a lecture for fear of

its being too aggressive, or a meeting for fear of its suggesting prayer, and as the members represent every shade of belief and unbelief—mostly unbelief—all of which tints have to be respected, life is becoming a vast negative.

“Floods of non-sectarian literature pour into the house. Yesterday, I perused ‘A word to young men about their conduct to young women’ (anonymous), ‘The respect due to women’ (ditto), ‘Courtship’ (ditto, ditto), which is mostly about Sylvia—and still I live and am not more than normally idiotic.

“In the evening, a graver problem appeared, namely Cruden’s Concordance, the English Bible, and the Rainbow Maker at the end of a blunt lead pencil, setting out to *explain the Apocalypse* to the various hues above-mentioned. . . . Here pause until the magnitude of the movement has permeated your inner mental consciousness.

“I reverently withdrew. It was the only possible attitude . . . decent flight. But I was eventually requested to give my interpretation of some woman who was mysteriously mixed up with a red dragon. With the work ‘Courtship’ still trickling through my weak-

ened mind, I asked, 'Who is the woman? Is she Sylvia?'

"The Rainbow Maker reflected upon this solution for about ten minutes without reply. It seemed as though it might have been satisfactory if it could, anyhow, have been fitted.

"Then she said reluctantly: 'No, she isn't Sylvia. No, certainly she isn't Sylvia.' And when further pressed as to the identity of the woman, after much pumping, she revealed that it was the woman clothed with the sun. This simplified things. I promptly replied 'Our Lady.'

"And it fitted well if S. John had not inconsiderately muddled up the battle in heaven with the Incarnation—as if the Incarnation had happened first. (If you don't believe this, see Chap. XII.)

"I mentally withdrew once more and then the Rainbow Maker, with what I call positive inspiration, cleared up the matter by deciding that as it is believed to have been the Incarnation for which the angels refused to serve, the woman was the vision of the Incarnation shown to the angels for their allegiance, and

when they refused it they were turned out of heaven.

“I was absolutely stunned by the whole thing and the dazzling brilliancy of this elucidation, which I fear I have put into garbled and clumsy language, and whose originality I could not doubt since she was consulting no Works because the discussion took place at dinner. We were dining off cold roast pork, humanely presented to us by one of our tenants, it being known that we never have anything worth speaking of to eat—apple sauce and other things, one of which I am almost sure was mustard.

“You see, what she is trying to do is to explain the existence of the angels and S. Michael and the devil. You remember her old devotion to these. And she is assuming that every member of the club is a rampant and highly trained atheist and, consequently, everything she *teaches has to be proved from the Bible*. Need I say more? *You* will understand.

“The consequence is that the whole house reeks with unfamiliar doctrines, wild weird books infest familiar shelves, and the Rainbow

Maker sits every afternoon before the aforementioned Concordance, doing sums in angels and keeping the places with burnt matches. I feel that the only safe and hallowed place is the chapel, into which spot she never penetrates. But she is unquestionably *undermining my faith*. That, so far, is the only active and immediate result of the Sunday 'gathering' at S. Michael's.

"Yours uneasily,

"OLIVA PRIMA.

"P.S.—The Rainbow Maker has just read this letter. She has asked me to give you a message from her to say, let me see now, what was it? It was a definite message to you to say that the serpent did get into Eden as revealed in Genesis. I don't clearly understand the message but then there is very little now that I do understand. There must have been something more than this for, otherwise, it would seem to be too much on a par(r) with the legend that Queen Anne is dead. Let me try again: the serpent did get into Eden, but first, he had to become a serpent and get turned out of heaven, and it is unfortunate

that people muddled up chronological events in writing the Bible because, properly speaking, the ejection of the devil ought to have preceded the creation of man instead of appearing only just in time before going to press at the end in the *Apocalypse*. Yes, I think that was the message."

CHAPTER XXV

BOOKS

Is there anything produced by the ingenuity of man to equal the gift of books? I should be a queer craftsman if I did not swear by my own art but, naturally, I swear by other people's books rather than my own.

I know what books have been to me all my life. We all know it. We all have our special friends and favourites, our special aversions.

Music is sublime and painting also, but the book is the all-round and ever-present friend. No special place or instrument is necessary for the companionship of a book. It is with us indoors and out, by day and by night, and travels at our bidding for a few pence to rejoice a friend at the other side of the world. It goes with us into the garden; nestled cosily in a pocket it scales a sun-kissed tor and rests with us on its summit. It shares the joys of

the fireside when, with toes on fender, we recline in the lamplight listening to the storm roaring in the chimney. It is the companion of our solitary meal times. It stays like a guardian angel beside our bed to cheer and strengthen in "the terror by night."

One of the charms of books is their variety of binding and size. A bored Bluejacket, after tidying a large book-shelf and sorting the books into authors, eyed the irregularity resulting from his efforts and opined that there ought to be a law compelling all authors to publish books the same size. I see his point, which is that of the mathematical tidiness of the Bluejacket, but I am thankful that Parliament is more untidy and does not pass such laws. The individual dress of each book friend is, as I say, one of its charms.

Speaking of covers, I generally design my own. I cannot draw even a round O or a straight line but I can design. Once I confided this to the Artist Jeweller, who soothed me and said that almost any fool can draw but very few can design. It was very sweet of her but I fear her kindness has not raised my opinion of my own efforts.

In the case of the paper wrapper of *Pearl*, I drew each object as I always do and labelled it so that there would be no mistake as to what each was meant for. The two figures of Pearl and Sir Francis in the foreground were put in last and were represented by two ovals. Unfortunately I did not allow enough room and the oval of Sir Francis was smaller than that of Pearl, but the humane artist rectified this for me.

When I designed the cover of *Through a Dartmoor Window*, I labelled each item, "This is the setting sun: This is a hill." The idea of that cover was that one was looking *out* through the window. The idea of the next, *The Dartmoor Window Again*, was that one was looking *in* through the window, which I consider made rather a sweet pair. In the last mentioned, I put the fat blue jug on the window sill and labelled it, "This is a jug." The artist thought it was time I had a take down so he wrote saying, "Is this object intended to represent a jug or a pig? Both from the drawing and the writing it might be either." To this of course I retorted, "Did you say pig or fig?"

When the cover design is ready, the publisher sends six or seven dummy empty book-covers to the author for selection of the colour. It is precisely like the book but contains no leaves and each cover is a different shade. This is always a most exciting day. The covers are stood in a row on the dresser for inspection and the Rainbow Maker and I sit opposite, wrangling over them. It is always most difficult to choose. Many things have to be considered, chiefly the effect of some particular cover among many other books on a book-stall or in a window. The commercial travellers are also an important factor in the decision, for they are soulless creatures who apparently choose a book entirely by its cover, and they will not speculate in books which are easily soiled.

In the Room of Shadow live all my dearest books, and one shelf contains the author's copies of my own efforts. Each is the first copy to reach me of the first edition. When I was young and foolish I used to keep a copy of each edition, but life and the book-shelf are too short now for this game. Therefore each author's copy is first edition and as soon

as I receive it by post, I write in it my name and the date. By now, my books are a long, long row, and I sometimes stand before them and think how tired I am. To me the writing of a book is such pure ecstasy that there is no joy in life to equal it, and the day that a book is finished, is one of the saddest days of life. This applies to book writing under normal conditions, but as my books always have to be written under difficulties and when some special uproar is going on, it makes the process tiring, which is unjust to me and to the book and the injustice rankles. I dream idle dreams of days to come in which I shall really have time to write, but these days have been over twenty years on their way and hope dies down.

This sacred shelf being in an open bookcase, is protected from the intrusive tripper by a hinged bar padlock which was designed by me and cleverly executed by Mr. Bluejacket.

The shelf contains another precious possession in the form of the first copy of the first edition of *My Lady of the Moor*, inscribed by the author, and a lovely little

Bees in Amber, bound in old gold calf and autographed. The only other similar copy possessed by any lady in the Empire is the one presented by the author to her Majesty, Queen Alexandra.

After all, it is not wonderful that we should love books, for this passion is of Divine origin, and some day, please God, we shall each see that most wonderful of all Books and our names written therein, "The Book of Life," containing so many true stories written by the Divine Hand.

CHAPTER XXVI

THE ROOM OF SHADOW

I ALWAYS feel that I have neglected this dear little old room. The Room of Sunshine has its own chapter in one of my books, but the Room of Shadow has only a poem in another. Yet it is far dearer to me and is far fuller of associations because we used the Room of Shadow from the very first days of the little old cottage, whereas the Room of Sunshine was only taken from the farm quite a few years ago.

The Room of Shadow was in fact the only downstairs room in the old cottage, and in those days it was very different to what it is now. It had suffered vicissitudes, and part of our building work was the restoration of this room.

Its big, open fire-place was disfigured with a hideous modern cooking-range. Its quaint, rough, irregular, black oak beam resting on



THE ROOM OF SHADOW

a chunk of granite was all covered and hidden with lath and plaster, its high, narrow, stone-mullioned windows covered over by a little slate shanty which also hid the old granite arched doorway, and two of the window lights were completely built up.

It is a much greater joy to restore than to create. The room now has long ago assumed its original aspect. As I sit by the glowing fire, it is a very picture of peace materialised. It is the most peaceful room in the house, and when I am tired, I seek it in preference to all the others. Perhaps the dim twilight is restful to weary nerves, and perhaps even more, its associations.

Round the fire-place are the old sheepskin panels decorated with the Rose of Lancaster in dingy shades of red, brown and copper. On the mantelpiece is the row of copper sauce-pans and beside the fire hang the bellows of mahogany and brass made from the "Old Britannia." The lamp with the daffodil shade burns softly at my elbow intensifying the old gold hue of the tablecloth on which stands a slender vase full of arum lilies. Outside, the rain is splashing down on the cobble-stones

from the thatch. That is another advantage or disadvantage of thatched roofs. The rain-water cannot be piped away from them so you get the full benefit of the drippings from the deep eaves.

In summer as I sit at dinner in the cool gray light of this room, through the open door leading into the garden I see the lilac tree against the gray granite wall, and I wonder if there could be anything more beautiful than gray and lilac till my pet pink hollyhock blossoms, and then I decide that gray and blotting-paper pink are prettier. This hollyhock draws the gaze upwards till one catches a glimpse of the gray rock crown of the Poet's Corner Tor behind it. I often think the picture seen through that open door, painted in a panel shape, would enhance the reputation of any artist.

This little old room is haunted by many ghosts, the ghosts of dead days and of departed friends some of whom will return and some who have gone for ever. It is here that I usually receive visitors for the first interview, and it is here too that some of my most poignant good-byes are said. Some ghosts

are sad for they are the days of broken friendships which seem shattered beyond repair in this world. Others are merely solemn and pathetic for they are the good-byes with those who will never again enter the room in the flesh. Its walls have heard many strange confessions but they guard the secrets well. Many protestations of undying love have here been given me ; some kept, some broken.

It was here, beside this fire, that my Hero of the Rose knelt the last time we met and only a few minutes before he went into chapel to keep his all night vigil before the White Altar. He was in all the beauty and brilliance of his prime, looking glorious as he knelt in uniform with his decorations and my two silver Roses of Lancaster over his heart.

“Olive,” he said, in his soft, lazy voice, “for the last time as a good-bye I want to say that I love you, and again I love you. Wherever I go, whatever happens to me I shall always love you, and when I am dead, then I shall love you best of all.”

So now he loves me best of all.

CHAPTER XXVII

SLEEP

THE magic of sleep !

And the magic of sleep on Dartmoor !

Especially with me, sleep has two functions ; it is a luxury or a necessity and it is difficult to say which is the sweeter. I think it is only since I came to live on Dartmoor that sleep has become a luxury, a pleasure which is frequently unnecessary.

My pillow faces north, and on a straight line from the foot of my bed is the window with two casements looking right up the valley to Hamildown. This is the aspect of earth from my pillow and the sky is almost always the Plough. I am glad that the constellation which watches over my sleeping hours should be one of the most immovable because this makes it an older friend. From that casement I see nothing of my Lady Moon, but on my left hand, the other window is even nearer and

as this is due west, especially in winter, I have a great deal of moonlight pouring even on my bed.

Then there are the other nights which are too bitter, even too Arctic, to allow a chink to be open, when I draw close the thick, shabby, green plush curtains like faded moss, and the ruby lamp on the little altar in the corner shines on the uncurtained glass of the north arch revealing glistening white ferns of frost and lines of wool-like snow outside every wooden beam of the window.

Inside the room, sleeping with me are various cherished possessions ; wearing apparel in the great mahogany wardrobe, each costume associated with the joys of some season or spot upon the Moor. Underneath it a row of footgear, telling mostly of loungings by the fire or noiseless ministrations in Chapel. On the dressing-table near my head are some of my best beloved jewels, among them the Heavenly Cross and chain, the olive-wreath badge, the little box of olive-wood containing the inscription of the ruby, and another box in which nestle all my pet ear-studs. On a higher shelf to the left are the two jewel cases

proper and next to them, a row of my pet mystics.

Pictures, each with a history, almost paper the room, and the sheets in which I lie, warm and serene, are a present from a dear woman who is wonderful with her needle and who has most exquisitely embroidered my full name in white across the top of each sheet. When she was making them, one carping critic remarked that it was unusual to emblazon a full name in large letters right across a sheet, to which my friend retorted that it depends on whose name it is and who owns the sheet.

I have often thought I would like to make some doctor explain to me the exact process of sleep. This is of course if any doctor really understands it. It is a miracle to which I never grow accustomed, the mysteriousness of it and its extraordinary healing capacity for mind and body.

Recently, I have been afflicted with gastric Influenza, which for sheer green-hued misery would take some rivalling. After a day of pain and sickness, high pulse and temperature, and inability to take food, which day began at the unholy hour of 2 a.m., I tottered

to bed utterly worn out at half-past seven in the evening and fell asleep at eight. I woke at midnight feeling like a new being in a new world. It is difficult to describe the miraculous change which had been wrought neither by drugs nor food but by nothing except heaven-sent sleep. This was of course a striking example of the healing power of sleep, but in a lesser degree the nightly experience is similar. One goes to bed, worn out, feeling unable to face the problems of modern life, and in a few hours after an unseen, unfelt and unconscious process one wakes, fit to conquer the world.

Then there are the other nights of luxury when one goes to bed because it is bedtime, not because one needs to sleep, and on these nights, one can afford to wake at intervals and spin out the luxury of falling asleep and waking again.

My bedroom is singularly perfect in its situation as the Chapel is west of me and in the photograph of the Chapel, the open casement which you see among the roses on the left is my west window. I am a little higher than the Chapel so I look down on it, on the warm,

brown roof and the granite cross draped with red roses. Always I fall asleep with my face turned to the Chapel; and often I think how perfect going west will be for me since I rehearse it every night and prepare for Brother Death by the ministries of Sister Sleep.

I always believe that my released soul will take a joyous leap through that rose-wreathed, west casement, but the leap will not be a great one for I shall not need to travel further than the Chapel where I shall find, unveiled, Him whom my soul seeketh.

By the way, I hope no one will weep or wear black for me. And I hope my death will occur at some festive season of the Church when a Black Mass will not be possible. I should like everyone to be in white or colours at my funeral, with piles of Sister Flowers and the bells ringing as if for a wedding. All this would only faintly reflect the eternal joy of heaven, and it is a sacrilege to cloud the joy of our immortal dead by our earthly sorrow.



VIEW FROM THE APPLE TREES

CHAPTER XXVIII

PLANTING APPLE TREES

WHAT a day it has been !

Resting now at dusk by the fire in the Room of Sunshine, drinking my inevitable black coffee with thick cream, I re-live the joys of the vanished hours. Where is day now ? To what mighty temple of time or eternity has she stolen ?

She came, a laughing, sun-crowned, dew-gemmed child from the pearl gates of the east—a bright Baby Day who had played truant from the nursery of April and stolen here to play with us long before she was out of pinafores. We knew she would grow sleepy soon ; that the Dustman would close her blue eyes by 4 o'clock, so we hastened out early to frolic with her.

Six dainty little apple trees had been travelling to me from Exeter for days, almost weeks. It is not a great journey but they had

had misfortunes. Despatched in mild weather, fleet Frost overtook them on the iron road and had all things in his sway before the journey was ended, as this journey ends, with a run along by the brown waters of the Dart.

Frost had swooped on us so suddenly that the roads were glass, frozen before they dried, so the poor little apple trees were stranded at the inhospitable station.

Anxiously I wrote instructing the station-master to cover them with sacks lest they should get frost-bitten and he returned a reassuring reply. A humane man, probably given to planting apple trees himself in his off time. A whole week passed, then came a sudden thaw. Two days ago, the wanderers arrived safely here after ten days out in the cold, rough world. When to-day dawned, the day of south wind, bright hot sun and shimmering raindrops, you can picture the eagerness with which the Chief and I donned our oldest rags and were out in the open by ten o'clock.

My oldest rags are the old tweed skirt and a thick black sweater under a pink smock frock. His were Service waistcoat with brass buttons,

Service brown gaiters like the coastguards', and everything else Navy Blue.

He had never planted an apple tree or indeed had one fine day in the open since his demobilisation. Often, I hug myself for the unspeakable joys which are coming to him as the year unfolds.

In fifteen years of married life he has never been two consecutive months with his wife and has never been able to see the result of anything he has tilled. Often on hurried leave, he has sown seeds but never has he seen them reach maturity. By then he has been the other side of heaven knows where.

I think of the lengthening days for him, of the first blunt noses of the daffodils, the first blackbird's song, the coming of the curlew and the cuckoo. He can stretch luxuriously on the couch of all the days which are ahead of him and even waste time because he will never again be snatched back to the relentless sea.

First, we measured out a circle of three feet from its centre like a fairy ring and then he neatly cut the turf out in green clods. We dug downwards three feet into

the rich fragrant earth and then put a lavish layer of luscious manure at the bottom of the shallow pit. To see the Chief Yeoman plunge into the manure heap was a sight. He literally wallowed with joy. To the born gardener, our mountains of manure, their quantity and quality, is our richest possession. I have an aunt who becomes unsafe in presence of the manure heap. She lives in a country where manure is not and she possesses a large garden. Alternately she admires and envies the farmyard and ends by wondering if I really appreciate my blessings.

The Chief appreciated his to-day and so did the apple trees, poor hungry little things. After a rich layer of manure, we sprinkled brown earth on top, to make a delicious sandwich. While he did this, I unpacked each tree from all its many wrappers and examined anxiously for signs of exhaustion or frost-bite. There were none. "Fair Maid of Devon" was the comeliest shape of all. With her came "Annie Elizabeth," "Sweet Alfred" and "Bramley Seedling," which last does splendidly in this high country.

We put in the Fair Maid first, I holding

her firmly in the centre of her fairy ring while the Chief shovelled in earth over her roots. We trod it well down, then laid on another layer of manure and, finally, replaced the green turf. She was the very happiest little apple tree in the county. I could almost see and hear her roots expanding, gripping hold of and absorbing the rich meal we had prepared for her. We dashed in for a grudging meal at midday, reluctant to leave our Bright-Eyed Day who was running so swiftly to her pillow in the west.

One of the Bramley Seedlings had a setback, for we found four great hunks of granite in this hole which delayed much as we had to dig them out.

At one point, when every minute was important, the Chief suddenly stopped, downed tools, and began frenziedly searching in all his pockets. It's an endless job, seeing a man go through his pockets, for when he has been through them once, he forgets which he has done and starts all over again.

I bore it till it was intolerable and then, with forced politeness, remarked, "If it's your pocket-handkerchief, it's there," pointing to

a vivid red one which protruded from his waistcoat buttons and fluttered in the breeze.

"I am not quite so bad as that yet, Miss," he retorted. "It's my ruler."

The blessed thing was not on him at all but was finally unearthed in his coat pocket which was hanging on a post.

We replaced the last sod at dusk, just as Baby Day had drawn her mist curtains close in the west—and a sprinkle of her tears fell upon us as we left the field—the farewell of a day which can never return again, here or hereafter.

I am to be buried in the lily bed where my ears may still be within sound of the sacring bell in the Chapel: but I sometimes think I should like my heart to be buried under those lovely little blossom-jewelled apple trees standing in the eye of the sun, overlooking this house, the Chapel and the eastern Moor, crowned by the Poet's Corner Tor.



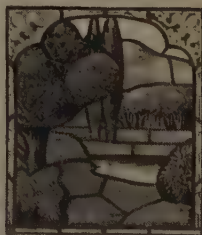
ANNUNCIATION.



PRESENTATION.



BLESSING THE CHILDREN.



FOLDED BESIDE THE STILL WATERS.

CHAPTER XXIX

STAINED GLASS

ONE of the joys of Christmas has been the fixing of an exquisite set of stained glass windows in the Chapel.

The artist announced that he was ready to come a week before Christmas Day, but I was unfortunately too busy killing time to have him. Consequently the joys of anticipation were lengthened, and the actual instalment took place on the Monday within the octave in plenty of time for New Year's Eve.

They are a gift from the Jeweller Artist and are worthy of her and worthy of the artist who has executed them. No praise could be higher than this, and no words can do adequate justice to the beauty of the windows.

Stained glass is as fascinating as jewellery, and has much in common with it. The colours are those of the richest gems.

Late in October the artist came out to see the Chapel, and before he had been here two minutes, I felt "this is the real thing."

My horrid views on art are well known and we also suffer considerably from the minor artist on Dartmoor. I often wonder why that qualifying word is not used about artists as it is about poets. Certainly artists are quite as minor as poets, and it was a joy to meet one who has the soul of a true artist allied to the highest possible technique. Often, one meets a man or woman who has the true artistic feeling but lacks the technical training to express it. At other times one meets the technical training with no soul behind it.

Rumours of the extraordinary beauty of the windows reached me before they themselves arrived from eye-witnesses who saw them before I did.

The Monday which was fixing day dawned mild and misty and I was ready, palping with anticipation, at 10 o'clock when the car arrived. It was quite dramatic because as the artist came in through one gate the Man who made the Window arrived through

the other and they both met on the doorstep. They might have come on to cue.

It made it quite perfect that the services of the Man who made the Window were needed for these windows also, the like of which have never been seen in this place, and the artist greeted him with enthusiasm, having long known him as a celebrity from afar.

The case was taken into the outer Chapel, and the very first window to be unpacked and held up to the light for my inspection was that of the Annunciation. I shall never forget it. The illustration gives you an idea of the wonderful drawing, but alas, it does not show the colouring. The angel's robe is white and his wings are a wonderful ruby. Our Lady's cloak is deep rich blue and her robe a dark ruby. Through her open window is blue sky and a glimpse of moor, and her beautiful face and head are encircled by seven stars. I really went quite mad with joy, and each pane, as it was unpacked, was taken in and shown to the Rainbow Maker. One of the artist's gifts is that for drawing old faces. Holy Simeon, Anna, and the old man in the blessing of the

children are so beautiful that they remind me of Mr. Coombe. The child on whom Our Lord's hand is resting is robed in gold, exactly the colour of sunshine, and the child in the very centre is in dark purple. In this window and in the Presentation, he has some wonderful shades of burnt sienna gold, the like of which I have never seen, and in all the corners is either the rose or the lily.

The masterpiece is the Good Shepherd to whom the Chapel is dedicated. It is very rare to get scenery in a stained glass window, and the view of the Moor behind with the river winding down from it is a joy. Just across the river under the big tree will be seen the other sheep. At times I am reproached by certain narrow-minded co-religionists for having so much to do with "outsiders," to which I reply with Our Lord's words, "Other sheep have I which are not of this fold; them also must I bring and there shall be one fold and one shepherd." They are still Our Lord's sheep though not of this fold.

The two symbolic windows on the east side are the most wonderful likeness of the Rose Chalice and the Rose Lamp against a back-

ground of the deepest blue. The book and the rays round the Chalice are gold and the carbuncle at the bottom of the Rose Lamp glows like a living thing. In the window itself, even the tongue of flame can be seen inside the glass.

We began by fixing the Annunciation window with its two fellows and then came the Good Shepherd, which was finished by lunch time. After lunch we returned to complete the two east panes, which were finished by three o'clock, and then the artist came in and saw necklaces and had tea and a happy tell by the Room of Sunshine fire before departing at five for his train. Providentially before his departure, it was dark enough for the next thrill, the lighting up of the windows from inside. I lighted the lamp and we floated round under umbrellas in the dark, I gloating on the beauty of the glowing colours shining like jewels set in ebon night.

There is no end to the thrills of those windows. The next excitement was to watch for a sunny day. In sunshine, they make one almost drunk with joy. In due time came the sight of them by moonlight, and I long to see

them when the sun has travelled sufficiently far to the west for sunset itself to be thrown on the two three-light windows.

The artist received one great tribute which delighted him as it was a professional tribute. I tried several times to wring from the Man who made the Window his opinion of their beauty, but he was reticent and praised them only in general terms. To the Lily Secretary, however, in the afternoon he unbent. Fetching her in, he said, "Look at that gate and they palings."

Needless to explain, the Man who made the Window is a carpenter so his admiration was professional, and the artist says if he has lived to draw palings and a gate in stained glass to satisfy a real carpenter, his art is not misspent.

CHAPTER XXX

NEW YEAR'S EVE

THE stained glass windows were finished on Monday. The next thrill was to show them proudly and gratefully to the dear donor.

We plotted that she should escape from town on New Year's Eve and spend three days of perfect peace at the Old Inn, so as to keep my midnight vigil with me to the music of the bells.

Tuesday was wet, Wednesday morning was overcast, but by noon the clouds melted away and the sun appeared. The great hour had come; the hour when I should see the windows in sunshine. Eagerly I went to pore over them in this new aspect. Anxiously I watched the heavens to see if the sun would shine till 2 o'clock when she would arrive.

Of course it did and of course everything was perfect. Though the lady had seen them

all and even knew them by heart before they were fixed, she was stunned by their beauty seen at last in their rightful setting. We all go in at intervals and stare for over half-an-hour at a time. In fact we have made a compact with the Lord asking Him to count this as prayer till we get used to the new beauty.

Then light faded and night came. Many of us, in the village and around, sit up to welcome the New Year. Others go to bed as usual but the well-brought-up ones keep a light burning in their rooms till after midnight "to let the little pisky in." It is an old superstition that the New Year comes as a pixy and if it finds no light in the house, it will give bad luck to such a domicile for the year. So look out for the orange-coloured square under warm low eaves on New Year's Eve up along Dartmoor way.

My friend arrived at 10 o'clock. It was a mild night with a beneficent moon as the perfect touch and the bells sent showers of melody along the valley and up to the heights. The ringers are on their mettle for this night of nights and the half-hour

before midnight is the most perfect specimen of ringing. Then they are in their stride, in perfect sympathy and the time is wonderful, not a second's unevenness between each bell and each new wave of melody.

Never do I see the full moon without also mentally hearing the way the sons of Devon pronounce that phrase. One Bluejacket did it best. I used to hatch plots to get him to say it unsuspectingly because, for contrariness, he never would, if he remembered.

I would remark, "It's F. M. to-night isn't it?"

"What do you mean, Miss? Fuull Muune?" would be the reply.

I invented a sentence for him to say to me as a reward when I was really good. "The fuull muune shining on the guuseberry buushes." Can't you hear the lilt of Devon as you read the words?

They tell us of the multitude of "All nations and tribes and peoples and *tongues*," up along, and so I hope greatly, for heaven itself would be incomplete without the liquid music of Devon tongues.

After the lady's arrival, we walked round, gloating, over her windows from outside.

Then we sat by the fire in the Room of Sunshine drinking black coffee and eating chocolates. At least, I ate chocolates. She was less frivolous. Here let me reply to those who accuse me of drinking too much coffee. I don't really. I sound to because I never drink tea, but I do not drink coffee in twenty-four hours as often as the rest of you drink tea. I own, in one way, I am a coffee maniac. It is the one thing in life which I could not give up. It helps me to understand inebriates. If you like, I am a coffee inebriate. Why I took to it so assiduously was because doctors told me it was poison to me. It was. And when doctors say this of any particular thing I at once systematically set to work to live on it. A doctor once drew me up a diet sheet. I studied it with care and reversed every order. I had to begin coffee only in small doses but I persevered and now I can drink it black with no food, any time—in the small hours if you like, and fall asleep at once. I attribute the toughness of my constitution to this practice

of inuring myself to all things which are worst for me. Seriously, it is the most hardening process there is.

Soon after 11, we went to Chapel. It looked—oh, as only it can look, late at night. It was one white peace, with the arum lilies on the altar and everything ready for the White Mass on New Year's Day only a few hours off. White peace—coloured ruby-red by the Rose Lamp; for what is Peace, even Peace herself, without Love? It must have been a wonderful hour for my beloved friend, there in the sweet Chapel which she has beautified, kneeling under the Lamp which her clever brain designed. One poor invalid who has never seen the Lamp and never will in this world wrote, when she received my description of it, saying, "It sounds like a thing conceived in a dream." This was curious, for she did not know that the whole lovely shape had come to my friend in a waking vision at night so that she rose from her bed to draw it before morning.

We two were there alone but the spirits of very many were keeping watch with us.

All the joys of the dying year passed

before my mental vision, all the new loves and the dear old loves and the countless blessings. At 11.30 began the magnificent ringing which continued without a pause till ten minutes to the hour. Then in a breathless silence, the tenor bell alone tolled out the death dole and I laid the old calendar behind the altar, after reciting the *Te Deum*, in token of giving a sacred gift back to God. Behind the altar is every calendar since the Chapel was built.

Then came silence.

The year was dead.

Suddenly the peal once more. The New Year was born, a veiled white angel carrying hidden gifts for each one of us.

Again I said the *Te Deum* and opened the calendar for the New Year, laying it afterwards on the altar step where it lies all night, or rather till morning, to consecrate it to God.

Then we came out and offered each other the first greetings of the year and the lady went back to her bed, along the moon-litten lane to the music of the bells.

Surely each beloved year of human life is

preserved in the vast temple of Eternity. Surely, its form will greet us, spirit wise, when Brother Death draws aside the material veil of creation. "Nothing will die," and the sun-litten, moon-silvered years of earthly life are immortal spirits from heaven.

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